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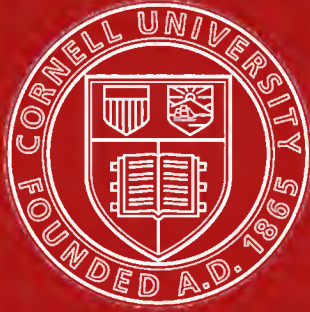
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THE COMPLETE WORKS OF  
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE  
IN FORTY VOLUMES

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*Editor's Autograph Edition*

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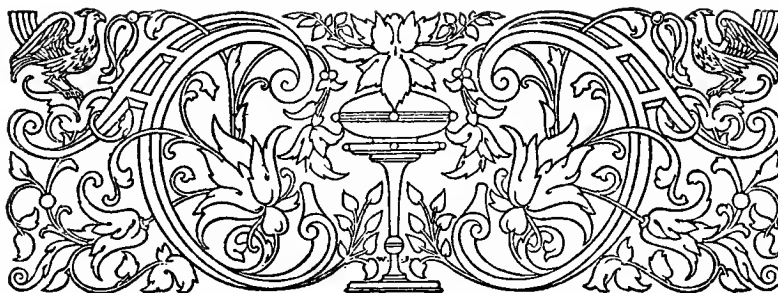


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THE COMPLETE WORKS OF  
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

WITH ANNOTATIONS AND  
A GENERAL INTRODUCTION  
BY SIDNEY LEE

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VOLUME XXXV

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TIMON OF ATHENS

WITH A SPECIAL INTRODUCTION BY HERBERT PAUL  
AND AN ORIGINAL FRONTISPIECE BY J. H. F. BACON



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NEW YORK GEORGE D. SPROUL MCMVIII

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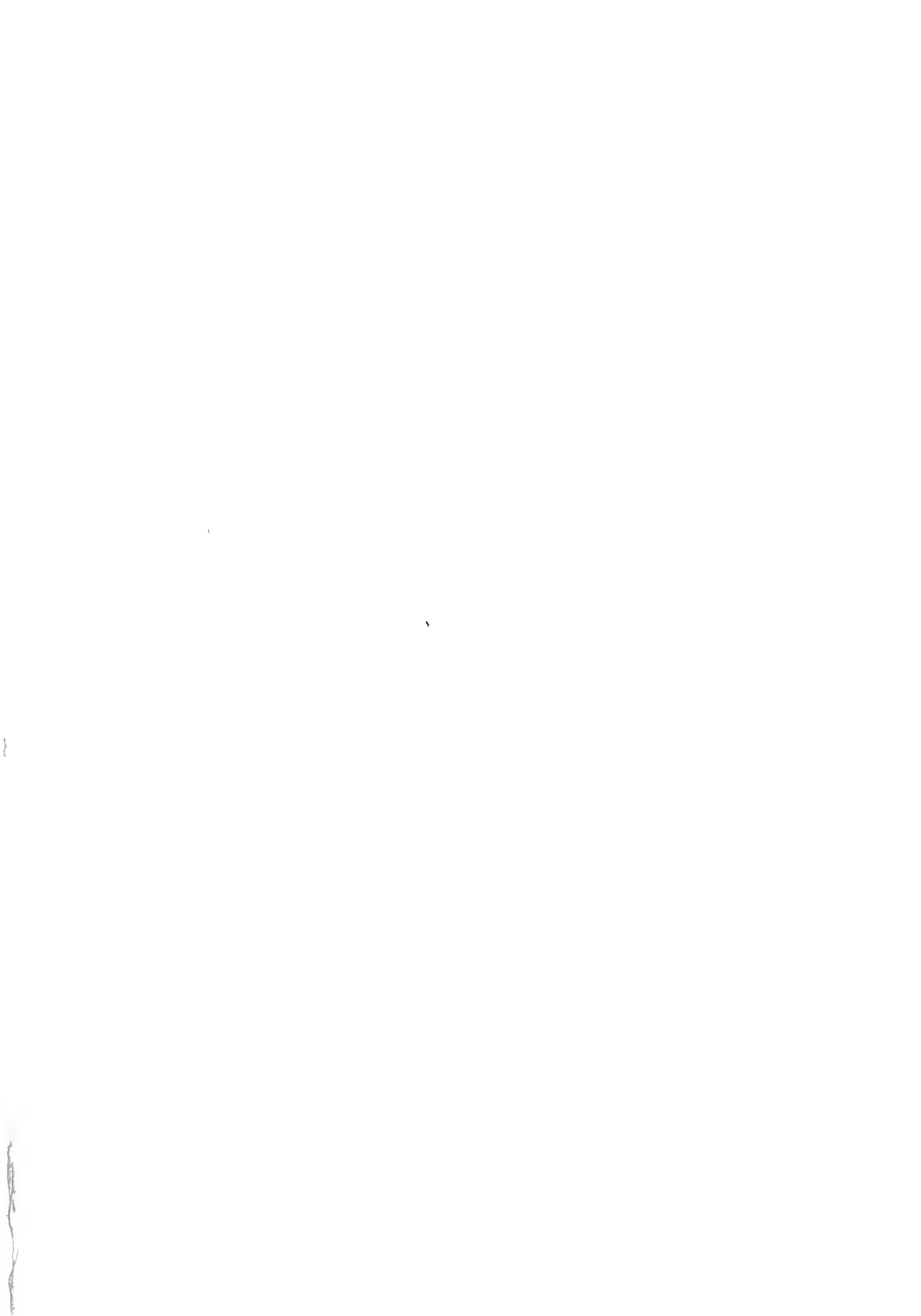
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# CONTENTS

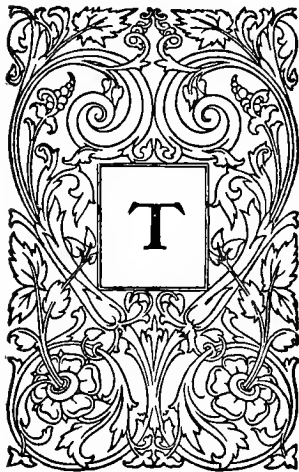
	PAGE
INTRODUCTION TO TIMON OF ATHENS BY HERBERT PAUL . . . . .	ix
TEXT OF THE PLAY . . . . .	1





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## INTRODUCTION



TO find Shakespeare in "Timon of Athens" is an ingenious exercise, and a not unprofitable expenditure of time. Mr. Lee, than whom there could be no higher authority, assigns to him the first two acts and the fourth, crediting George Wilkins with the third and the fifth. If, as Mr. Lee hints, Wilkins had something to do with that magnificent play "The Yorkshire Tragedy," his dramatic power must have been considerable; for there is no English playwright except Shakespeare whose fame would not be raised if it were proved that he had written "The Yorkshire Tragedy." As much cannot be said for "Timon of Athens," in which we may feel sure that Shakespeare took very little interest himself. Yet diligent search reveals some faint

## TIMON OF ATHENS

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trace of him, and the dust of his writings is gold. The story of the play, which may have been taken from Plutarch, from Lucian, from Painter, or from Boiardo, is singularly crude and displeasing. Timon was a wealthy Athenian citizen of the great days, the generation after Pericles, when the martyrdom of Socrates was still recent and Plato was yet alive. It is perhaps needless to say that local colour will be sought in vain. Just as Shakespeare's Verona contains an alehouse, but no amphitheatre, no market-place, and no tombs of the Scaligers; so in the Athens of Timon there are drums and fifes and other appliances of modern civilisation, but no Acropolis and no Parthenon. The play opens in the true Shakespearean manner, with an easy and natural scene which introduces the subject without the formality of an explanation. Perhaps the best example of Shakespeare's method in this respect is the dialogue between Sampson and Gregory at the beginning of "Romeo and Juliet." Here we have artists and tradesmen waiting for an audience in the hall of Timon's house. Their conversation discloses his manner of life. He is rich, open-handed, liberal, indiscriminate in his generosity, ostentatious though kindly in his patronage. He "passes," that is, he exceeds the common run of men. The painter has made a portrait of him. The poet has written verses in his honour. All men speak well of him, and find their account in flattering him. But even on the threshold of the drama an admonitory note is struck. The poet has feigned Fortune to be throned on a high and pleasant hill, beckoning Timon to her, and multitudes follow

## INTRODUCTION

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Timon's steps. Then he goes on in lines which we may well accept as Shakespeare's to foreshadow the *μῦθος*, the plot and moral, of the tragedy :—

“When Fortune in her shift and change of mood  
Spurns down her late beloved, all his dependants  
Which labour'd after him to the mountain's top,  
Even on their knees and hands, let him slip down,  
Not one accompanying his declining foot.”

These words are uttered significantly enough before Timon appears upon the stage.

He comes on talking to the servant of his old friend Ventidius, imprisoned for debt. The debt will at once be paid, and Timon's kindness will not end there. With a construction, terse and pregnant, which Shakespeare did not know to be Thucydidean, he adds :—

“'Tis not enough to help the feeble up,  
But to support him after.”

A further promise on Timon's part to provide a dowry for his servant Lucilius elicits the cynical proverb, appropriate to the story, that honesty is its own reward. Amid a chorus of gross and rather sickening flattery there enters Apemantus, by far the best and most vivid person of the drama. Timon, as will be seen, changes from one extreme to another,—from universal confidence to equally universal distrust. Apemantus never changes at all. He is a cynic from the first, and with him cynicism means the natural shamelessness of the dog, not the acquired indifference of the philosopher.

## TIMON OF ATHENS

---

There is no dignity in him as there is in Diogenes. He represents the merely brute element in human nature, what Zola, whose mind it haunted, called *la bête humaine*. The genius of Shakespeare alone could have made such a character endurable, and yet Shakespeare bestowed, if we may judge by appearances, very little thought or labour upon Apemantus. If we compare the exquisite and inimitable humour which the prodigal master has lavished upon the fool in "Lear," upon the nurse in "Romeo and Juliet," upon Launce in "The Two Gentlemen of Verona," upon Master Shallow, upon Mrs. Quickly, or upon Falstaff's ragged retainers, with Apemantus's celebrated and not altogether ignoble grace, it will help us to realise how little Shakespeare cared for his reputation, and how completely he could surrender himself to the whim of the moment. Apemantus, however, has his allotted place in the development of the drama. He gives Timon, who had not heard the speech of the poet, his first warning. The poet's words are meant for the audience; Apemantus addresses Timon himself. He is not heeded because he oversteps the mark. To Apemantus all Athenians are knaves, and that not because they are Athenians, but because they are men. He is wrong in the general, and yet in this particular instance he is right. If Timon can be blamed for ignoring his unrestrained vituperation, it is not because Apemantus was justified in his estimate of mankind, but because the false friends made with the Mammon of unrighteousness, to adapt the scathing irony of the parable, last so long as the means of corruption last, and no longer.



## INTRODUCTION

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Timon's friends belonged to the cream of Athenian society. Cream is like scum, it rises to the top. In this very first scene of the play we are introduced to Alcibiades, the most brilliant personage among the public men of that time, the Cæsar of Athens, without moral principle, but equally distinguished in culture and in action, and immortalised by Plato in the most poetical of all philosophic dialogues. But as Dr. Caius most pertinently asked, when he found that "honest man" Master Simple, what the honest man did in his closet, so we may ask what the dazzling disciple of Socrates does in this play. Here he only comes to dine with Timon. How they are afterwards associated we shall see. At the end of the stage-directions for the second scene of the first act is the graphic sentence, "Then comes, dropping after all, Apemantus, discontentedly, like himself." Alcibiades in "Timon of Athens" is emphatically not like himself. He is a rough, frank soldier, a sort of inferior Coriolanus, with no more philosophy than Timon, though he possesses the accomplishment, not unusual at Athens in those days, of being able to read. In this scene, the scene of a very different banquet from that with which the name of Alcibiades will always be connected, he speaks like a Hotspur without his humour. The central figure is neither he nor Timon, but Apemantus, whose railings may be called the second warning of Timon; and yet with the warning there is encouragement, the offer of Ventidius, who has inherited his father's fortune, to repay Timon's loan, "doubled with thanks and service," "doubled" being a

## TIMON OF ATHENS

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sign of addition, not of multiplication. At the dinner, when Timon quotes Seneca, as Hector in "Troilus and Cressida" quotes Aristotle, there falls from Apemantus that terrible line

"I wonder men dare trust themselves with men,"

which might serve for the motto of the whole play, the English equivalent of the Latin proverb, *homo homini hepus*, amplified in the following couplet:—

"Methinks they should invite them without knives;  
Good for their meat, and safer for their lives."

The grace of Apemantus passes unheeded as the fitting utterance of an enemy to good company and good cheer. So, too, does a passage in Timon's reply to the thanks of his guests, upon which, if the play had been an Athenian one, the quick-witted spectators would at once have fastened. "Why," says the giver of the feast, "I have often wished myself poorer, that I might come nearer to you." This unconscious utterance of a truth unknown to the utterer, by no means characteristically Shakespearean, is the irony of the Greek tragedians. There was one who must have felt the grimness of the fanciful aspiration. Flavius, Timon's steward, is the one sound and honest character in the play. It is his business to provide the materials for his master's bounty. But his master is already in debt, and Flavius is at the end of his resources. He has none of Caleb Balderstone's ingenuity. All he could do was to give his master good advice, which his master never took. The verdict of common sense is wholly unfavourable to Timon, and

## INTRODUCTION

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pronounces that he was responsible for his own misfortunes. But the tribunal of common sense is a narrow, and therefore an unjust one. "Every man," said Tennyson, "imputes himself." Apemantus lived in a world of Apemantuses. Because he had no self-respect, he had no respect for others. Timon was not a prudent man, nor even, as the sequel shows, a wise one. Yet was it an unselfish, though a vulgar, error that misled him. He gave, it is true, to those who did not want. He gave because he loved giving. But he never turned his face from any poor man, he never failed to relieve distress, and he could not realise that there were men who would refuse assistance to friends in time of need. The Senator, in the first scene of the second act, utters the precept of common sense, or, in other words, of enlightened selfishness : —

" I love and honour him ;  
But must not break my back to heal his finger."

So, like a sensible man, he demands payment at once, lest the other creditors should get beforehand with him. He had received from Timon many gifts; but he does not allow that fact to warp his judgment, and, as a man of the world, he cannot help condemning the wanton extravagance which has brought his benefactor into such a sorry plight. Nevertheless, to paraphrase Shakespeare's words in another case, he was not altogether a wise man nor Timon altogether a fool. As much foolery as one had, so much wisdom the other lacked. Timon was entitled to say : —

## TIMON OF ATHENS

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“No villainous bounty yet hath passed my heart ;  
Unwisely, not ignobly have I given.”

Therefore he counted that it would be a successful experiment to “try the argument of hearts by borrowing.” Flavius, though an honest man, was under no such illusion. He was honest, but he was not magnanimous, and therefore he understood men as they are better than Timon : —

“Ah, when the means are gone that buy this praise,  
The breath is gone whereof this praise is made.”

This praise, not any praise. Flavius is the mean between the cynicism of Apemantus and the idealism of Timon.

The third act, which in the main is almost certainly not Shakespeare's, though it contains Shakespearean touches, describes the bitter disillusionment of Timon, and his rather paltry revenge. All his friends refuse to help him. Even Ventidius, who offered him five talents before, seems, with an unaccountable access of parsimony, to have withheld them now, though this is not expressly stated. The interviews of Timon's servants with these men are extremely repulsive, relieved only here and there by a stroke of humour, as when Lucullus says he has often dined with Timon, “and come again to supper with him, to have him spend less,” or when Lucius confesses that he has “received some small kindnesses from him, as money, plate, jewels, and such-like trifles.” Then follows a scene between Alcibiades and the Senate which is not germane to the matter, but looks as if it had been

## INTRODUCTION

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taken from another piece. It is certainly not in the least Shakespearean and is almost wholly devoid of literary merit. Alcibiades pleads for a friend of his, lying under judgment of death for culpable homicide. The Senate reject his plea, and banish his friend. Whereupon he vows vengeance in bombastic language, ending with this precious couplet :—

“T is honour with most lands to be at odds ;  
Soldiers should brook as little wrongs as gods.”

Who the friend of Alcibiades was, and what he had done, we are not told. The news of the banishment forms a topic of conversation at the mock feast to which Timon has invited his friends and creditors. But Timon takes no notice of it and apparently does not hear it. In this scene there is what some have taken for a reference to an older play of “Timon” by an unknown author, written about 1600. In the older play, an abominably bad one, the feast is composed of stones painted like artichokes. In our “Timon” the dishes contain only warm water. Yet after Timon has flung the water and the dishes at the heads of his guests, there occurs this elegant dialogue, with which the scene closes :—

“2 *Lord.* Lord Timon’s mad.

3 *Lord.* I feel ’t upon my bones.

4 *Lord.* One day he gives us diamonds, next day stones.”

The antithesis would be hard to match for badness, and the allusion to stones has not the slightest point as it stands. This play is botched rather than made, though

## TIMON OF ATHENS

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here and there is a purple or Shakespearean patch. There is vigour, though not much else, in the vituperative lines :—

“ Most smiling, smooth, detested parasites,  
Courteous destroyers, affable wolves, meek bears,  
You fools of fortune, trencher-friends, time’s flies,  
Cap-and-knee slaves, vapours, and minute-jacks.”

Still it is a fish-fag’s eloquence, and simple swearing would be quite as impressive.

In the fourth act, which Mr. Lee assigns to Shakespeare, Timon has left Athens, and, looking back upon the walls, embraces the whole city in one comprehensive anathema, most of which is mere raving. The following lines are the least unlike Shakespeare’s style :—

“ Religion to the gods, peace, justice, truth,  
Domestic awe, night-rest, and neighbourhood,  
Instruction, manners, mysteries, and trades,  
Degrees, observances, customs, and laws,  
Decline to your confounding contraries,  
And let confusion live.”

After this the speaker degenerates into the formless expression of blind rage, invoking leprosy upon the general population of Athens, and mere sciatica upon the Senate. Flavius, the steward, in discharging the servants and paying them out of his own pocket, is not without greatness of soul, and there is a gloomy power in some of his reflections, as, for instance :—

“ O, the fierce wretchedness that glory brings us !  
Who would not wish to be from wealth exempt,  
Since riches point to misery and contempt ? ”

## INTRODUCTION

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There is nothing, said the Marquess of Halifax, upon which men spend more money than upon making themselves ridiculous. Timon in his loneliness and poverty is not so much an object of ridicule as Timon among his flatterers and parasites. But he cannot escape from "yellow, glittering, precious gold." While he digs for roots, the favourite food of Apemantus, he finds the root of all evil, that which makes the "learned pate" "duck to the golden fool." To him at his task comes Alcibiades marching on Athens, and accompanied by two courtesans, exceptionally degraded specimens of their class, who never open their mouths except to curse or to beg. But in cursing they cannot contend with Timon, whose coarseness in this scene is like the coarseness of Swift, not prurient and not ribald, but delighting in whatever degrades mankind. Such misanthropy as Swift's, at its worst, and Timon's, in this scene, is unfit for literature or for the stage. It is a sight to shudder at, not to see. When Timon gives Alcibiades money to help him in destroying Athens, when Phrynia and Timandra beg Timon for more money as he rains abuse upon their heads, we feel misanthropy as Balaustion felt obscenity, "grotesqued so much, it slinks away revolted at itself." After the departure of Alcibiades and his retinue Timon is visited by Apemantus, and the dialogue between the two is most curious. Apemantus has always hankered after Timon, and as if to show that pure misanthropy is impossible for a sane man, he approaches him now in quest of something very like sympathy. "Do not assume my likeness," he says with disinterested candour :—

## TIMON OF ATHENS

---

“Be thou a flatterer now, and seek to thrive  
By that which has undone thee.”

But Timon, so far from being drawn to his brother misanthrope, abhors him utterly, and when Apemantus thinks to ingratiate himself with the outcast whom he “loves better now than e’er he did,” by saying that he sought him out to vex him, Timon replies, with much method in his madness:—

“Always a villain’s office or a fool’s.”

In the fine speech where he describes himself as “left open, bare for every storm that blows,” the misanthrope made by circumstance asserts his superiority over the misanthrope by nature.

“Why shouldst thou hate men?  
They never flattered thee,”

is a cry of anguish as well as an expression of disgust.

“I, to bear this,  
That never knew but better, is some burden,”

has a human ring which once more makes Timon bearable. As for Apemantus, he is a degree lower than the melancholy Jaques. Jaques had been “a brutish libertine.” Apemantus would have been one if he had had the chance. The conversation of Apemantus and Timon, though it ends in the mere calling of names, has in it more stuff than any other part of the play. There is daring in the address to the thieves who have come for Timon’s new gold, and find themselves almost flouted out of their calling by the extravagance of his cynicism.



## INTRODUCTION

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There is pathos in Timon's final dismissal of Flavius, the just steward, to whom he gives money on condition that he will "build from men," that is, live in solitude. But neither episode will compare with the scene between Timon and Apemantus, to which I shall return.

There is not much trace of Shakespeare in the fifth act of "Timon," which drags its slow length across the stage. The report of Timon's new treasure, spread through Athens by Alcibiades and his female companions, brings him, as Apemantus predicted that it would, a fresh troop of visitors. First we have the poet and the painter, who are beaten and driven out with reproaches, neither exaggerated nor undeserved. Then comes a Deputation from the Senate, asking him to take the field against Alcibiades. The poet and the painter were at least logical, for if Timon had gold, he might give some to them. But how it would enable him to

". . . drive back  
Of Alcibiades the approaches wild"

the Senators wisely make no effort to explain. All they get from Timon is a torrent of contumelious language, in which their supplications are drowned. The absurdities of the situation are manifest. How did the Senators, or Flavius who accompanies them, get out of Athens while Alcibiades was besieging it? How could Alcibiades have spread the report of the treasure without entering the city? Other like questions might be put. But we forget them all before the last speech of Timon, pure Shakespeare in its opening lines, though Wilkins or any

## TIMON OF ATHENS

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one else may have added the final tag. "Come not," he says:—

"Come not to me again: but say to Athens,  
Timon hath made his everlasting mansion  
Upon the beached verge of the salt flood;  
Whom once a day with his embossed froth  
The turbulent surge shall cover."

So we might well leave him. But it seems that before his death he wrote his epitaph, discovered by a soldier, and deciphered by Alcibiades. It is quite unworthy of Shakespeare, and cannot possibly be his. The dialogue between Alcibiades and the soldiers on the walls is still worse. It is held after Timon's death, and its sole connection with the play is that from the general amnesty which he grants to the city Alcibiades excepts the enemies, meaning the friends, of Timon as well as his own. The reconciliation of Alcibiades and the Athenian people with which the play concludes has nothing to do with the subject. Alcibiades, whatever else he may have been, was no misanthrope.

Signs of carelessness, either in construction or in style, are no disproof of Shakespeare's authorship. Shakespeare could be as careless and as bounteous as nature herself. He cared no more for consistency than he cared for the historical character of Cardinal Beaufort, or for the geographical position of Bohemia. A robust and acute critic has gone so far as to say that "Hamlet" was the one play upon which he expended minute and careful pains. It is not the roughness and crudity of "Timon," but the flat, prosaic dulness in which it abounds, that,

## INTRODUCTION

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apart altogether from external evidence, forbids us to regard it as the work of the master. Its hard, repellent ugliness is not equalled in any other piece attributed to Shakespeare except "Titus Andronicus," which almost all Shakespearean scholars now discard. The ostentatious cynicism of "Troilus and Cressida" is attractive in comparison with the taunts of Apemantus and the ravings of Timon. "Timon of Athens," according to Mr. Lee's authoritative chronology, was composed within a few months of "King Lear." Is it possible to believe that they are from the same mint? Lear himself is sometimes rough and coarse. He was the barbarous chieftain of a barbarous age, whereas Timon was the citizen of a community as refined and civilised as the England of Elizabeth. After the second act, with a short interval between his meeting Cordelia and her death, Lear is mad. Timon, though he loses his temper, never loses his wits. Yet Lear excites pity and terror, Timon contempt and disgust. Contrast Lear in the storm on the heath with Timon digging in front of his cave:—

*Lear.* Rumble thy bellyful! Spit, fire! spout, rain!  
Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters:  
I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness;  
I never gave you kingdom, call'd you children,  
You owe me no subscription: then let fall  
Your horrible pleasure; here I stand, your slave,  
A poor, infirm, weak, and despised old man."

*Timon.* Let me look back upon thee, O thou wall,  
That girdlest in those wolves, dive in the earth,

## TIMON OF ATHENS

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And fence not Athens. Matrons turn incontinent ;  
Obedience fail in children. Slaves and fools  
Pluck the grave wrinkled senate from the bench,  
And minister in their steads. To general filths  
Convert o' the instant, green virginity,  
Do 't in your parents' eyes."

This specimen of Timon's vituperation is rather favourable than otherwise, while there are even finer passages in "Lear" than the magnificent lines quoted above. If both were written by the same man at the same time, we can only say of Shakespeare, as Horace says of Homer, that he sometimes nods.

Taking, however, the tragedy of "Timon" as we find it, and recognising the admitted fact that Shakespeare had some part in it, great or small, we naturally ask the question what there was in a familiar story that aroused his interest, what aspect of human nature it presented to his eyes. From this forbidding drama the influence of the fairer and softer sex is ruthlessly shut out. In the older play Timon's approaching marriage is prevented by his ruin. Both the girl's father and the girl herself refuse to take him without his money. There is not even this miserable semblance of love in Shakespeare's "Timon," as for the sake of brevity one may call it. There are no women at all, except a few dancing girls to enliven the first banquet, and two shameless harpies in the train of Alcibiades. When we consider that no other man knew women as Shakespeare knew them, that he was the creator of Rosalind, of Beatrice, of Portia, of Imogen, of Cordelia, we may safely infer that he deemed the situation

## INTRODUCTION

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unworthy of their presence. For if it be said that a wife or a daughter would have done what Flavius could not do, and checked extravagance before it led to disaster, it may be replied that the loss of a mistress would have added poignancy to the loss of friends. There are two characters in "Timon," and two alone, which are not merely conventional. One, of course, is Timon himself; the other is Apemantus. That Shakespeare took any interest in Alcibiades and the Senate is incredible. Lucius and Lucullus were alike to him. They were no more than Alcibiades's unknown client. The vanity of riches, even if he had strongly felt it, was in itself too trite a theme. What, then, was it that drew the eye of the master to this old tale? I believe it to have been the mutual relations between the outraged sentimentalist Timon and the born cynic Apemantus. Shakespeare never cares how vile is the mouth into which he puts his deepest sayings. The most magnificent lines on death ever written by man are spoken by the weak and cowardly Claudio in "Measure for Measure." "Timon of Athens" contains nothing that approaches such a level as that; but Apemantus has some of Iago's shrewdness. When he is not idly railing, he can speak words of practical wisdom. "What man," he asks Timon, "what man didst thou ever know in thrift that was loved after his means?" To which Timon retorts feebly enough, "Who, without those means thou talkest of, didst thou ever know beloved?" There is point in the remark of Apemantus, there is none in Timon's, because Apemantus sees clearly what he always saw, the baser elements in man, which

## TIMON OF ATHENS

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Timon has swung round from an irrational optimism to a pessimism equally devoid of reason. "The middle of humanity," Apemantus tells him with truth, "thou never knewest, but the extremity of both ends." Apemantus can talk sense. The lowest of mankind can do that, in life, as in Shakespeare; and Apemantus is no sensualist. Even when meat and wine are set before him, he prefers roots and water. He is low because he cannot admire, because the quality of his eye is to see evil and not good. He thought that Timon had become such an one as himself, and could rejoice in his company. The statement that he had come to vex him was a lie. The greeting he received was the reverse of that which he expected. Timon hates Apemantus even more than he hates the rest of mankind because Apemantus makes misanthropy seem odious and contemptible. "One that hath had losses," as Dogberry says, he cannot away with a railer on mankind who never had anything to lose. He has given Apemantus a good conceit of himself. There is a smug complacency, quite unlike his usual style of address, in the couplet with which he opens:—

"I was directed hither: men report  
Thou dost affect my manners, and dost use them."

This is the last drop in Timon's cup. It does not, as it might have done, produce a reaction by disgust; but it makes him curse Apemantus with a particular heartiness, as though the latter occupied some black depth of iniquity below the abyss of human wickedness in

## INTRODUCTION

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which all the world is plunged. From his misery he cries:—

“Were I like thee, I’d throw away myself.”

The whole of this extraordinary scene is undoubtedly Shakespeare’s, and the speech of Apemantus from

“This is in thee a nature but infected ”

to

“Do not assume my likeness ”

is thoroughly Shakespearean. The verse is smooth, as it seldom is in this play, and yet every line is packed with meaning. Timon, says Apemantus, is a mere imitator; he himself is the genuine cynic. This comparison is, as we have seen, more than Timon can bear, and in depicting the effect of Apemantus upon him Shakespeare displays all his art. But while “Timon of Athens” is something more than a practical sermon upon the hollowness of wealth, it is nothing less. If Timon had been a poor man, he would have been a happy one, and he knows it. “Here is no use for gold,” says Apemantus. “The best and truest,” replies Timon.

“For here it sleeps, and does no hired harm.”

*Aurum irrepertum sic melius situm*, said Horace. The gold best situated is gold undiscovered. Horace was an Epicurean and a man of the world, knowing well by experience all that gold could do; and that was his deliberate judgment. Timon, Shakespeare’s Timon, is of the same mind. He neither hoarded his gold nor spent it

## TIMON OF ATHENS

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on himself. He lavished it upon his neighbours, and it brought neither gratitude nor respect. Nor, open-handed as he was, was he altogether reckless in his liberality. His provision for the marriage portion of Lucilius is thoughtful and considerate, as well as generous. What he gave he gave graciously, and like a gentleman, seeking to spare the recipient all the irksomeness of obligation. If money could buy "that which should accompany old age, as honour, love, obedience, troops of friends," Timon would have bought them all. But when they found that there was nothing more to be got out of him, his friends, or his parasites, forsook him and fled. Shakespeare assuredly did not mean to imply that Timon's friends were exceptionally depraved. The faithful steward is the exception; they are the rule. Shakespeare was no pessimist, no cynic, no misanthrope, no disbeliever in true friendship; but he did not think that friendship, or respect, or anything beyond material comforts, could be bought. The great and gloomy satirist of Rome said that there was no greater hardship in poverty than the ridicule it excited. The greater and deeper philosopher whose share in "Timon of Athens" is its sole interest now never holds up poverty to contempt. Neither Timon nor his trencher-fed pack of friends were poor until they had ruined him, and then it is not his poverty that drives him frantic, but the exposure of his vulgar ideal. Vulgarity was the source of his delusions and the cause of his fall; not the superficial vulgarity of outward behaviour, but the essential vulgarity which misapprehends the real value of things. In Athens, not long before



## INTRODUCTION

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the days of Timon, there was a teacher so poor that, though he taught as no man had ever taught before him, he could hardly have given one of his disciples a dinner. But when he was in danger of an unjust doom he did not fear; most of his friends would willingly have died for him, and all remained with him to the end. Shakespeare knew what true friendship was. It is the feeling of Horatio for Hamlet, of Bassanio for Antonio, of Kent for Lear. But it cannot be bought with all the gold of Ophir. If a man should give the whole substance of his house for it, he would utterly be contemned.

HERBERT PAUL.



**TIMON OF ATHENS**

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ<sup>1</sup>

TIMON, a noble Athenian.

LUCIUS,  
LUCULLUS, } flattering lords.  
SEMPRONIUS, }

VENTIDIUS, one of Timon's false friends.

ALCIBIADES, an Athenian captain.

APEMANTUS, a churlish philosopher.

FLAVIUS, steward to Timon.

Poet, Painter, Jeweller, and Merchant.

An old Athenian.

FLAMINIUS,  
LUCILIUS, } servants to Timon.  
SERVILIUS, }

CAPHIS,  
PHILOTUS,  
TITUS,  
HORTENSIUS,  
And others, } servants to Timon's creditors and to the Lords.

A Page. A Fool. Three Strangers.

PHRYNIA,  
TIMANDRA, } mistresses to Alcibiades.

Cupid and Amazons in the mask.

Other Lords, Senators, Officers, Banditti, and Attendants.

SCENE: *Athens, and the neighbouring woods*

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<sup>1</sup> This piece was first printed in the First Folio. The opening Scene is headed "*Actus Primus, Scæna Prima.*" No other scenic division is indicated. The First Folio prints at the end of the piece a somewhat imperfect list of "The Actors Names" (*i. e.*, the *Dramatis Personæ*). Rowe first supplied scenic divisions and a full list of characters.



ACT FIRST — SCENE I — ATHENS

*A HALL IN TIMON'S HOUSE*

*Enter Poet, Painter, Jeweller, Merchant, and others, at  
several doors*

POET



GOOD DAY, SIR.

PAIN. I am glad you're well.

POET. I have not seen you  
long: how goes the world?

PAIN. It wears, sir, as it grows.

POET. Ay, that's well known:  
But what particular rarity?  
what strange,

Which manifold record not  
matches? See,

Magic of bounty! all these  
spirits thy power

Hath conjured to attend. I  
know the merchant.

PAIN. I know them both; the other's a jeweller.

MER. O, 'tis a worthy lord!

JEW.

Nay, that's most fix'd.

[ 3 ]

MER. A most incomparable man, breathed, as it were, 10  
To an untirable and continue goodnes :

He passes.

JEW. I have a jewel here —

MER. O, pray, let's see't: for the Lord Timon, sir?

JEW. If he will touch the estimate: but, for that —

POET. [*Reciting to himself*] "When we for recompense  
have praised the vile,

It stains the glory in that happy verse

Which aptly sings the good."

MER. [*Looking on the jewel*] 'T is a good form.

JEW. And rich: here is a water, look ye. 20

PAIN. You are rapt, sir, in some work, some dedi-  
cation

To the great lord.

POET. A thing slipp'd idly from me.

Our poesy is as a gum, which oozes

From whence 't is nourish'd: the fire i' the flint

Shows not till it be struck; our gentle flame

Provokes itself, and, like the current, flies

Each bound it chafes. What have you there?

10 *breathed*] inured, trained. "Breathed" is the epithet often applied  
to a well-trained horse, who is in good wind.

11 *continue*] constant, incapable of interruption.

12 *passes*] surpasses (all experience).

15 *touch the estimate*] come up to or reach the price.

20 *a water*] a fine lustre (of the jewel).

23 *gum, which oozes*] Johnson's correction of the Folio reading *gowne*,  
*which uses*.

27 *chafes*] Theobald's correction of the old reading *chases*. Cf. *Jul. Cæs.*,  
I, ii, 101: "Tiber *chafing* with her shores," and *Lear*, IV, vi, 20-21:  
"the murmuring surge That on th' unnumber'd idle pebbles *chafes*."

SCENE I            TIMON OF ATHENS

PAIN. A picture, sir. When comes your book forth?

POET. Upon the heels of my presentment, sir.  
Let's see your piece.

30

PAIN. 'T is a good piece.

POET. So 't is: this comes off well and excellent.

PAIN. Indifferent.

POET. Admirable: how this grace  
Speaks his own standing! what a mental power  
This eye shoots forth! how big imagination  
Moves in this lip! to the dumbness of the gesture  
One might interpret.

The passage seems to mean that the poet's vein, flowing swiftly like the current of a stream, scorns to be obstructed by the banks which it chafes while hurrying past them.

29 *Upon the heels of my presentment*] As soon as the book has been presented to its patron.

32 *comes off well and excellent*] is a complete success. "Come off," like "turn out," is still colloquially used thus.

33 *Indifferent*] Tolerable: neither good nor bad.

33-34 *how this grace Speaks his own standing*] how the artistic grace of this portrait does full justice to the pose of the original. A "speaking" portrait of Timon, one which paints him to the life, is the subject of the criticism. Cf. *Cymb.*, II, iv, 82-83: "never saw I figures So likely to report themselves."

36-37 *to the dumbness . . . interpret*] in such lifelike gesture, though necessarily speechless, one could easily read words. "Interpret" appears to have the technical significance of "serve the office of interpreter," "interpreter" being the technical title of the person employed to speak for the puppets in the puppet shows of the day. Cf. *Two Gent.*, II, i, 85-86: "O excellent motion [*i. e.*, puppet show]! O exceeding puppet! now will he interpret to her," and *Hamlet*, III, ii, 240-241: "I could interpret between you and your love, if I could see the puppets dallying."

PAIN. It is a pretty mocking of the life.  
Here is a touch; is't good?

POET. I will say of it,  
It tutors nature: artificial strife  
Lives in these touches, livelier than life.

40

*Enter certain Senators, and pass over*

PAIN. How this lord is follow'd!

POET. The senators of Athens: happy man!

PAIN. Look, moe!

POET. You see this confluence, this great flood of  
visitors.

I have, in this rough work, shaped out a man,  
Whom this beneath world doth embrace and hug  
With amplest entertainment: my free drift

40-41 *artificial strife . . . touches*] this contest between art and nature (the execution of the pencil emulating nature) gives life to these touches. Cf. *Venus and Adonis*, 289-292:

“Look, when a painter would surpass the life,  
In limning out a well-proportion'd steed,  
*His art with nature's workmanship at strife,*  
*As if the dead the living should exceed;*”

43 *man*] Theobald's emendation of the Folio reading *men*.

44 *moe*] more, which form of the word Rowe substituted for the archaic *moe* of the Folio.

47 *this beneath world*] this lower world. Cf. *Lear*, II, ii, 158: “this under globe,” and *Meas. for Meas.*, IV, iii, 85: “this under generation.”

48-53 *my free drift . . . tract behind*] The general meaning of the passage is that the poet's wide, unrestrained aim or outlook does not pause to scrutinise any individual person but moves in an expansive sea of observation; no malice which is aimed at any particular man taints one comma of his discourse: his poem flies like the eagle boldly and on a



SCENE I      TIMON OF ATHENS

Halts not particularly, but moves itself  
 In a wide sea of wax: no levell'd malice 50  
 Infects one comma in the course I hold;  
 But flies an eagle flight, bold and forth on,  
 Leaving no tract behind.

PAIN. How shall I understand you?

POET. I will unbolt to you.

You see how all conditions, how all minds,  
 As well of glib and slippery creatures as  
 Of grave and austere quality, tender down  
 Their services to Lord Timon: his large fortune,  
 Upon his good and gracious nature hanging,  
 Subdues and properties to his love and tendance 60  
 All sorts of hearts; yea, from the glass-faced flatterer

---

straight course, leaving no trace of mischief or envy behind it. In other words, the poet aims at emphasising Timon's supreme virtue by dint of an universal generalisation of human life, rather than by individual characterisation, or censure of other individuals. Jacques, in *As you like it*, II, vii, 70, *seq.*, with a cognate subtlety, deprecates censure of individuals, when the general vices of human nature are under discussion. The grammatical construction is irregular and somewhat elliptical. "Sea of wax" has been interpreted as a mass of waxen writing tablets, which were familiar in Rome, and in medieval monasteries, so that it might be equivalent to a "sea of ink." It seems more probable that "wax" merely means here "expanding growth"; Falstaff puns on the word "wax" in the sense of growth in *2 Hen. IV*, I, ii, 150: "If I did say of *wax*, my *growth* would approve the truth."

54 *unbolt*] unfold, explain.

56 *glib and slippery*] smooth-tongued and fickle.

60 *properties*] appropriates.

61 *the glass-faced flatterer*] the sycophant who mirrors every changing expression of his patron.

To Apemantus, that few things loves better  
 Than to abhor himself: even he drops down  
 The knee before him, and returns in peace  
 Most rich in Timon's nod.

PAIN. I saw them speak together.

POET. Sir, I have upon a high and pleasant hill  
 Feign'd Fortune to be throned: the base o' the mount  
 Is rank'd with all deserts, all kind of natures,  
 That labour on the bosom of this sphere  
 To propagate their states: amongst them all, 70  
 Whose eyes are on this sovereign lady fix'd,  
 One do I personate of Lord Timon's frame,  
 Whom Fortune with her ivory hand wafts to her;  
 Whose present grace to present slaves and servants  
 Translates his rivals.

PAIN. 'T is conceived to scope.  
 This throne, this Fortune, and this hill, methinks,  
 With one man beckon'd from the rest below,  
 Bowing his head against the steepy mount  
 To climb his happiness, would be well express'd  
 In our condition.

62-64 *Apemantus . . . before him*] The poet mistakes the attitude of Apemantus to Timon; that cynic never shows himself a flatterer of Timon.

68 *Is rank'd . . . deserts*] Is packed with men of all degrees of merit.

70 *To propagate their states*] To further their estates or improve their fortunes.

74-75 *Whose present grace . . . rivals*] [Fortune] whose present generosity (to Timon) turns those who were his equals into his slaves and servants for the time being.

75 *'T is conceived to scope*] 'T is a conception to the purpose.

79-80 *would be well . . . condition*] would offer suitable interpretation of, or fit comment on, the general state of our affairs.

SCENE I      TIMON OF ATHENS

---

POET.                Nay, sir, but hear me on.                         80  
All those which were his fellows but of late,  
Some better than his value, on the moment  
Follow his strides, his lobbies fill with tendance,  
Rain sacrificial whisperings in his ear,  
Make sacred even his stirrup, and through him  
Drink the free air.

PAIN.                Ay, marry, what of these?

POET. When Fortune in her shift and change of  
   mood  
Spurns down her late beloved, all his dependants  
Which labour'd after him to the mountain's top  
Even on their knees and hands, let him slip down,             90  
Not one accompanying his declining foot.

PAIN. 'T is common :

A thousand moral paintings I can show,  
That shall demonstrate these quick blows of Fortune's  
More pregnantly than words. Yet you do well  
To show Lord Timon that mean eyes have seen  
The foot above the head.

---

83 *with tendance*] with attendance, with waiting on him.

84 *Rain . . . ear*] Pour whispers as if to a god to whom they are making sacrificial offerings.

85-86 *through him Drink the free air*] They inhale air which is free to all, as if it were his gift to them.

90 *slip*] Rowe's emendation of the Folio reading *sit*.

95 *pregnantly*] aptly.

96-97 *mean eyes . . . head*] men of mean and ordinary capacity have noticed Fortune's tendency to reverse her favourites' luck, to turn them upside down.

*Trumpets sound. Enter LORD TIMON, addressing himself courteously to every suitor; a Messenger from VENTIDIUS talking with him; LUCILIUS and other servants following*

TIM. Imprison'd is he, say you?

MESS. Ay, my good lord: five talents is his debt;  
His means most short, his creditors most strait:  
Your honourable letter he desires 100  
To those have shut him up; which failing,  
Periods his comfort.

TIM. Noble Ventidius! Well,  
I am not of that feather to shake off  
My friend when he must need me. I do know him  
A gentleman that well deserves a help:  
Which he shall have: I'll pay the debt and free him.

MESS. Your lordship ever binds him.

TIM. Commend me to him: I will send his ransom;  
And, being enfranchised, bid him come to me:  
'T is not enough to help the feeble up, 110  
But to support him after. Fare you well.

MESS. All happiness to your honour! [Exit.

*Enter an old Athenian*

OLD ATH. Lord Timon, hear me speak.

98 *talents*] Among the Greeks the "talent" was a weight of money equivalent to 6000 drachmae or some £200 sterling (or 1000 dollars); "five talents" would be worth more than £1000 or 5000 dollars. Elsewhere (cf. III, i, 19, *infra*) Shakespeare loosely makes a talent the equivalent of an English pound.

101-102 *which failing . . . comfort*] failure of which puts a period or end to his comfort.

104 *he must need me*] he cannot but want my assistance.

SCENE I      TIMON OF ATHENS

---

TIM.      Freely, good father.

OLD ATH. Thou hast a servant named Lucilius.

TIM. I have so: what of him?

OLD ATH. Most noble Timon, call the man before thee.

TIM. Attends he here, or no? Lucilius!

LUC. Here, at your lordship's service.

OLD ATH. This fellow here, Lord Timon, this thy creature,

By night frequents my house. I am a man    120  
That from my first have been inclined to thrift,  
And my estate deserves an heir more raised  
Than one which holds a trencher.

TIM.      Well, what further?

OLD ATH. One only daughter have I, no kin else,  
On whom I may confer what I have got:  
The maid is fair, o' the youngest for a bride,  
And I have bred her at my dearest cost  
In qualities of the best. This man of thine  
Attempts her love: I prithee, noble lord,  
Join with me to forbid him her resort;    130  
Myself have spoke in vain.

TIM.      The man is honest.

OLD ATH. Therefore he will be, Timon:  
His honesty rewards him in itself;  
It must not bear my daughter.

TIM.      Does she love him?

---

123 *one which holds a trencher*] a serving man who waits at table.  
132-134 *Therefore . . . daughter*] Therefore he will continue to be honest; his honesty ought to be its own reward; it should not carry off my daughter in addition.

OLD ATH. She is young and apt:  
Our own precedent passions do instruct us  
What levity's in youth.

TIM. [*To Lucilius*] Love you the maid?

LUC. Ay, my good lord; and she accepts of it.

OLD ATH. If in her marriage my consent be missing,  
I call the gods to witness, I will choose 140  
Mine heir from forth the beggars of the world,  
And dispossess her all.

TIM. How shall she be endow'd,  
If she be mated with an equal husband?

OLD ATH. Three talents on the present; in future, all.

TIM. This gentleman of mine hath served me long:  
To build his fortune I will strain a little,  
For 't is a bond in men. Give him thy daughter:  
What you bestow, in him I'll counterpoise,  
And make him weigh with her.

OLD ATH. Most noble lord,  
Pawn me to this your honour, she is his. 150

TIM. My hand to thee; mine honour on my promise.

LUC. Humbly I thank your lordship: never may  
That state or fortune fall into my keeping,  
Which is not owed to you!

[*Exeunt Lucilius and old Athenian.*]

135 *apt*] susceptible.

136 *precedent*] former, earlier.

143 *an equal husband*] a husband of equal fortune.

147 *a bond in men*] a bounden duty of masters to servants.

152-154 *never may . . . owed to you*] whatever may be the position that fortune appoints for me I shall hold it altogether due to you (and wholly at your service).

SCENE I            TIMON OF ATHENS

---

POET. Vouchsafe my labour, and long live your lordship!

TIM. I thank thee; you shall hear from me anon:  
Go not away. What have you there, my friend?

PAIN. A piece of painting, which I do beseech  
Your lordship to accept.

TIM.                                 Painting is welcome.  
The painting is almost the natural man;                                 160  
For since dishonour traffics with man's nature,  
He is but outside: these pencill'd figures are  
Even such as they give out. I like your work,  
And you shall find I like it: wait attendance  
Till you hear further from me.

PAIN.                                 The gods preserve ye!

TIM. Well fare you, gentleman: give me your hand;  
We must needs dine together. Sir, your jewel  
Hath suffer'd under praise.

JEW.                                 What, my lord! dispraise?

TIM. A mere satiety of commendations.  
If I should pay you for 't as 't is extoll'd,                                 170  
It would unclaw me quite.

JEW.                                 My lord, 't is rated

162-163 *He is but outside . . . give out*] He is but an empty semblance  
(a whited sepulchre); pictures have no hypocrisy; they are just what  
they profess to be.

167-168 *Sir, your jewel . . . dispraise*] Your jewel has suffered owing to  
the high praise bestowed on it. The jeweller misunderstands Timon's  
words "under praise," and wrongly interprets them "dispraise," *i. e.*,  
depreciation.

171 *unclaw*] undo; the figure is from unwinding a ball of yarn thread.

As those which sell would give: but you well know,  
 Things of like value, differing in the owners,  
 Are prized by their masters: believe 't, dear lord,  
 You mend the jewel by the wearing it.

TIM. Well mock'd.

MER. No, my good lord; he speaks the common  
 tongue,

Which all men speak with him.

TIM. Look, who comes here: will you be chid?

*Enter APEMANTUS*

JEW. We'll bear, with your lordship.

MER. He'll spare none.

TIM. Good morrow to thee, gentle Apemantus! 181

APEM. Till I be gentle, stay thou for thy good  
 morrow;

When thou art Timon's dog, and these knaves honest.

TIM. Why dost thou call them knaves? thou know'st  
 them not.

APEM. Are they not Athenians?

TIM. Yes.

APEM. Then I repent not.

JEW. You know me, Apemantus?

174 *Are prized by their masters*] Are appraised according to the esteem in which their masters or owners are held.

175 *You mend the jewel . . . it*] Cf. I, ii, 166, *infra*: "to advance this jewel," and note.

182-183 *Till I be . . . honest*] Apemantus will not return Timon's "Good morrow" till he becomes gentle, which will only be when Timon is transformed into the shape of his dog, and his knavish followers become men of honesty (all which will never be).



SCENE I            TIMON OF ATHENS

---

APEM. Thou know'st I do; I call'd thee by thy name.

TIM. Thou art proud, Apemantus. 190

APEM. Of nothing so much as that I am not like Timon.

TIM. Whither art going?

APEM. To knock out an honest Athenian's brains.

TIM. That's a deed thou'lt die for.

APEM. Right, if doing nothing be death by the law.

TIM. How likest thou this picture, Apemantus?

APEM. The best, for the innocence.

TIM. Wrought he not well that painted it?

APEM. He wrought better that made the painter;  
and yet he's but a filthy piece of work. 201

PAIN. You're a dog.

APEM. Thy mother's of my generation: what's she, if I be a dog?

TIM. Wilt dine with me, Apemantus?

APEM. No; I eat not lords.

TIM. An thou shouldst, thou'ldst anger ladies.

APEM. O, they eat lords; so they come by great bellies.

TIM. That's a lascivious apprehension. 210

APEM. So thou apprehend'st it: take it for thy labour.

TIM. How dost thou like this jewel, Apemantus?

APEM. Not so well as plain-dealing, which will not cost a man a doit.

TIM. What dost thou think 't is worth?

---

198 *The best, for the innocence*] An ironical phrase; "innocence" is often used for stupidity or imbecility. Apemantus credits Timon's portrait with a namby-pamby expression.

213-214 *Not so well . . . a doit*] An allusion to the proverb, "Plain dealing is a jewel, but those that use it die beggars."

APEM. Not worth my thinking. How now, poet!

POET. How now, philosopher!

APEM. Thou liest.

POET. Art not one?

APEM. Yes.

220

POET. Then I lie not.

APEM. Art not a poet?

POET. Yes.

APEM. Then thou liest: look in thy last work, where thou hast feigned him a worthy fellow.

POET. That's not feigned; he is so.

APEM. Yes, he is worthy of thee, and to pay thee for thy labour: he that loves to be flattered is worthy o' the flatterer. Heavens, that I were a lord!

TIM. What wouldst do then, Apemantus?

230

APEM. E'en as Apemantus does now; hate a lord with my heart.

TIM. What, thyself?

APEM. Ay.

TIM. Wherefore?

APEM. That I had no angry wit to be a lord. Art not thou a merchant?

MER. Ay, Apemantus.

APEM. Traffic confound thee, if the gods will not!

---

236 *That I had no angry wit to be a lord*] Thus the old editions. The expression is difficult. The passage may mean that he lacks that petulant wit, which befits a lord, who is often credited with a haughty impatience of speech. But "to be a lord" may have the privative force of "to prevent me from becoming a lord," in which case Johnson may be right in explaining the whole passage: "I should hate myself for tamely enduring to be a lord."

SCENE I      TIMON OF ATHENS

MER. If traffic do it, the gods do it. 240

APEM. Traffic's thy god; and thy god confound thee!

*Trumpet sounds. Enter a Messenger*

TIM. What trumpet's that?

MESS. 'T is Alcibiades, and some twenty horse,  
All of companionship.

TIM. Pray, entertain them; give them guide to us.  
*[Exeunt some Attendants.]*

You must needs dine with me: go not you hence  
Till I have thank'd you: when dinner's done,  
Show me this piece. I am joyful of your sights.

*Enter ALCIBIADES, with the rest*

Most welcome, sir!

APEM.                So, so, there!

Aches contract and starve your supple joints! 250  
That there should be small love 'mongst these sweet  
knaves,

And all this courtesy! The strain of man's bred out  
Into baboon and monkey.

ALCIB. Sir, you have saved my longing, and I feed  
Most hungerly on your sight.

TIM.                                Right welcome, sir!

244 *All of companionship*] All of the same social rank.

248 *I am joyful of your sights*] I am glad you should see it.

250 *Aches*] A dissyllable. The word was pronounced "aitches." Cf. V, i, 197, *infra*: "Their fears of hostile strokes, their *aches*, losses." *starve . . . joints*] destroy the suppleness of your joints, and so stiffen them as in rheumatic affections.

Ere we depart, we'll share a bounteous time  
In different pleasures. Pray you, let us in.

[*Exeunt all but Apemantus.*]

*Enter two Lords*

FIRST LORD. What time o' day is 't, Apemantus?

APEM. Time to be honest.

FIRST LORD. That time serves still. 260

APEM. The most accursed thou, that still omitt'st it.

SEC. LORD. Thou art going to Lord Timon's feast?

APEM. Ay, to see meat fill knaves and wine heat  
fools.

SEC. LORD. Fare thee well, fare thee well.

APEM. Thou art a fool to bid me farewell twice.

SEC. LORD. Why, Apemantus?

APEM. Shouldst have kept one to thyself, for I mean  
to give thee none.

FIRST LORD. Hang thyself!

APEM. No, I will do nothing at thy bidding: make  
thy requests to thy friend. 271

SEC. LORD. Away, unpeaceable dog, or I'll spurn  
thee hence!

APEM. I will fly, like a dog, the heels o' the ass. [*Exit.*]

FIRST LORD. He's opposite to humanity. Come,  
shall we in,

And taste Lord Timon's bounty? he outgoes  
The very heart of kindness.

SEC. LORD. He pours it out; Plutus, the god of gold,

256 *depart*] part or separate; a common usage.

272 *unpeaceable*] quarrelsome.

276-277 *he outgoes . . . kindness*] he outdoes the very soul of kindness.

SCENE II      TIMON OF ATHENS

---

Is but his steward: no meed, but he repays  
Sevenfold above itself; no gift to him, 280  
But breeds the giver a return exceeding  
All use of quittance.

FIRST LORD.      The noblest mind he carries  
That ever govern'd man.

SEC. LORD.      Long may he live in fortunes! Shall  
we in?

FIRST LORD.      I'll keep you company. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II — A BANQUETING-ROOM IN TIMON'S  
HOUSE

*Hautboys playing loud music. A great banquet served in;  
FLAVIUS and others attending; and then enter LORD TIMON,  
ALCIBIADES, Lords, Senators, and VENTIDIUS. Then comes,  
dropping after all, APEMANTUS, discontentedly, like himself*

VEN.      Most honour'd Timon,  
It hath pleased the gods to remember my father's age,  
And call him to long peace.  
He is gone happy, and has left me rich:  
Then, as in grateful virtue I am bound  
To your free heart, I do return those talents,  
Doubled with thanks and service, from whose help  
I derived liberty.

---

279 *meed*] desert.

282 *All use of quittance*] All custom of requital, any ordinary mode of  
discharging obligations

6 *free*] liberal, bountiful.

TIM. O, by no means,  
 Honest Ventidius; you mistake my love:  
 I gave it freely ever; and there's none 10  
 Can truly say he gives, if he receives:  
 If our betters play at that game, we must not dare  
 To imitate them; faults that are rich are fair.

VEN. A noble spirit!

TIM. Nay, my lords, ceremony was but devised at first  
 To set a gloss on faint deeds, hollow welcomes,  
 Recanting goodness, sorry ere 't is shown;  
 But where there is true friendship, there needs none.  
 Pray, sit; more welcome are ye to my fortunes  
 Than my fortunes to me. [They sit. 20

FIRST LORD. My lord, we always have confess'd it.

APEM. Ho, ho, confess'd it! hang'd it, have you not?

TIM. O, Apemantus, you are welcome.

APEM. No;

You shall not make me welcome:

I come to have thee thrust me out of doors.

TIM. Fie, thou'rt a churl; ye've got a humour there  
 Does not become a man; 't is much to blame.  
 They say, my lords, "ira furor brevis est;" but yond  
 man is ever angry. Go, let him have a table by him-

13 *faults . . . fair*] There is a fair plausibility in the faults of rich people, especially in such as tend to increase their wealth. (But their faults are faults all the same.)

22 *confess'd it! hang'd it*] an allusion to the common colloquial phrase, "Confess and be hanged!"

28 "*ira furor brevis est*" "Anger is a brief madness"; a Latin proverb, quoted by Horace, *Epistles*, I, ii, 62.

29 *ever angry*] Rowe's emendation of the Folio reading *very angry*.

SCENE II      TIMON OF ATHENS

---

self; for he does neither affect company, nor is he fit so for 't indeed.

APEM. Let me stay at thine apperil, Timon:  
I come to observe; I give thee warning on't.

TIM. I take no heed of thee; thou'rt an Athenian,  
therefore welcome: I myself would have no power;  
prithee, let my meat make thee silent.

APEM. I scorn thy meat; 't would choke me, for I  
should ne'er flatter thee. O you gods, what a number  
of men eat Timon, and he sees 'em not! It grieves me  
to see so many dip their meat in one man's blood; and 40  
all the madness is, he cheers them up too.

I wonder men dare trust themselves with men:  
Methinks they should invite them without knives;  
Good for their meat, and safer for their lives.  
There's much example for't; the fellow that sits next  
him now, parts bread with him, pledges the breath of  
him in a divided draught, is the readiest man to kill

---

32 *apperil*] peril.

35 *I myself would have no power*] The laws of hospitality deprive a host of the power of silencing a guest.

37-38 *I scorn thy meat . . . flatter thee*] "Grudged meat" (according to the proverb) chokes the person that eats it. Apemantus means that Timon's meat is only given willingly to those who pay for it in flattery. Since he could not flatter, the meat, being grudged, would stick in his throat.

40 *so many dip . . . blood*] An allusion to hounds drinking the blood of the prey they slaughter in the chase.

43 *without knives*] Guests invited to an Elizabethan banquet were expected to bring their own knives. The next line suggests that if they came without knives, they would be more sparing with the food, and the host would stand in less danger of his life.

him: 't has been proved. If I were a huge man, I should fear to drink at meals;

Lest they should spy my windpipe's dangerous notes: 50  
Great men should drink with harness on their throats.

TIM. My lord, in heart; and let the health go round.

SEC. LORD. Let it flow this way, my good lord.

APEM. Flow this way! A brave fellow! he keeps his tides well. Those healths will make thee and thy state look ill, Timon. Here's that which is too weak to be a sinner, honest water, which ne'er left man i' the mire: This and my food are equals; there's no odds: Feasts are too proud to give thanks to the gods.

*Apemantus's Grace*

Immortal gods, I crave no pelf;  
I pray for no man but myself:  
Grant I may never prove so fond,  
To trust man on his oath or bond,  
Or a harlot for her weeping,  
Or a dog that seems a-sleeping,  
Or a keeper with my freedom,  
Or my friends, if I should need 'em.  
Amen. So fall to't:

60

Rich men sin, and I eat root. [*Eats and drinks.*]

Much good dich thy good heart, Apemantus!

70

50 *windpipe's dangerous notes*] The gurgling sounds made by the big-wig's throat in drinking call the evil-minded man's attention to where the windpipe is.

51 *harness*] armour.

52 *in heart*] in all sincerity.

70 *dich*] commonly explained as a corruption of "do it." Cf. *Merry Wives*, I, i, 73: "Much good *do it* your good heart."



SCENE II      TIMON OF ATHENS

---

TIM. Captain Alcibiades, your heart's in the field now.

ALCIB. My heart is ever at your service, my lord.

TIM. You had rather be at a breakfast of enemies than a dinner of friends.

ALCIB. So they were bleeding-new, my lord, there's no meat like 'em: I could wish my best friend at such a feast.

APEM. Would all those flatterers were thine enemies, then, that then thou mightst kill 'em and bid me to 'em!

FIRST LORD. Might we but have that happiness, my lord, that you would once use our hearts, whereby we might express some part of our zeals, we should think ourselves for ever perfect. <sup>80</sup>

TIM. O, no doubt, my good friends, but the gods themselves have provided that I shall have much help from you: how had you been my friends else? why have you that charitable title from thousands, did not you chiefly belong to my heart? I have told more of you to myself than you can with modesty speak in your own behalf; and thus far I confirm you. O you gods, think <sup>90</sup> I, what need we have any friends, if we should ne'er have need of 'em? they were the most needless creatures living, should we ne'er have use for 'em, and would most resemble sweet instruments hung up in cases, that keep their sounds to themselves. Why, I have often

---

83 *perfect*] perfect in happiness, completely happy. Cf. *Macb.*, III, iv, 21: "I had else been *perfect*."

86-88 *why have you . . . my heart?*] why are you distinguished from thousands, from the multitude of men, by holding that title of friend, if it were not that you are bound to me heart and soul?

90 *thus far I confirm you*] to that extent I am confirmed in my opinion of you.

wished myself poorer, that I might come nearer to you. We are born to do benefits: and what better or properer can we call our own than the riches of our friends? O, what a precious comfort 't is, to have so many, like brothers, commanding one another's fortunes! O joy, e'en made away ere't can be born! Mine eyes cannot hold out water, methinks: to forget their faults, I drink to you. 103

APEM. Thou weep'st to make them drink, Timon.

SEC. LORD. Joy had the like conception in our eyes, And at that instant like a babe sprung up.

APEM. Ho, ho! I laugh to think that babe a bastard.

THIRD LORD. I promise you, my lord, you moved me much.

APEM. Much! [Tucket, within.]

TIM. What means that trump?

*Enter a Servant*

How now! 110

SERV. Please you, my lord, there are certain ladies most desirous of admittance.

100-102 *O joy . . . water, methinks*] Tears are involuntarily filling Timon's eyes, and thereby destroying joy before it comes to full fruition. His eyes cannot refrain from tears.

102 *their faults*] the tearful weakness of the eyes.

104 *to make them drink*] at making the guests drink.

105-106 *Joy . . . sprung up*] Joy produced the same birth of tears in our eyes, and thereupon joy came to life like a newborn babe. "Like a babe" implies allusion to "baby" in the special sense of the small image of oneself reflected in the pupil of another's eye whence the familiar phrase "to look babies (*i. e.*, to look for babies, to cast amorous glances)." Cf. *Tell-trothe's New Year's Gift* (1598), p. 39, "that *babie* which lodges in women's eies."

SCENE II      TIMON OF ATHENS

---

TIM. Ladies! what are their wills?

SERV. There comes with them a forerunner, my lord,  
which bears that office, to signify their pleasures.

TIM. I pray, let them be admitted.

*Enter Cupid*

CUP. Hail to thee, worthy Timon! and to all  
That of his bounties taste! The five best senses  
Acknowledge thee their patron, and come freely  
To gratulate thy plenteous bosom: th' ear, 120  
Taste, touch, and smell, pleased from thy table rise;  
They only now come but to feast thine eyes.

TIM. They're welcome all; let 'em have kind admit-  
tance:

Music, make their welcome! [Exit Cupid.]

FIRST LORD. You see, my lord, how ample you're  
beloved.

*Music. Re-enter Cupid, with a mask of Ladies as Amazons, with  
lutes in their hands, dancing and playing*

APEM. Hoy-day, what a sweep of vanity comes this  
way!

---

117 *Hail to thee, worthy Timon!*] It was customary for masquers at a feast in a great house to be introduced by a prologue spoken by a child, personating Cupid. Cf. *Rom. and Jul.*, I, iv, 4-8: "We'll have no Cupid hoodwink'd with a scarf . . . Nor no without-book prologue, faintly spoke After the prompter, for our entrance." See also *L. L. L.*, V, ii, 158-173.

120 *th' ear*] Theobald's emendation (at the suggestion of Warburton) of the Folio reading *There*. The preceding words of Cupid's speech are printed as prose in the Folios.

They dance! they are mad women.  
 Like madness is the glory of this life,  
 As this pomp shows to a little oil and root.  
 We make ourselves fools, to disport ourselves, 130  
 And spend our flatteries, to drink those men  
 Upon whose age we void it up again  
 With poisonous spite and envy.  
 Who lives, that's not depraved or depraves?  
 Who dies, that bears not one spurn to their graves  
 Of their friends' gift?  
 I should fear those that dance before me now  
 Would one day stamp upon me: 't has been done;  
 Men shut their doors against a setting sun.

*The Lords rise from table, with much adoring of TIMON; and to show their loves, each singles out an Amazon, and all dance, men with women, a lofty strain or two to the hautboys, and cease*

TIM. You have done our pleasures much grace, fair  
       ladies, 140  
 Set a fair fashion on our entertainment,  
 Which was not half so beautiful and kind;  
 You have added worth unto 't and lustre,

128-129 *Like madness . . . oil and root*] The glory of this life is just as much madness (in the eye of reason) as all this luxury, when compared with a frugal meal of oil and vegetable, is insane waste.

131 *to drink those men*] in order to get drink and entertainment out of those men. Cf. lines 38-39, *supra*: "What a number of men *eat* Timon."

134 *depraves*] indulges in slander.

143 *and lustre*] Thus the First Folio. The Second and later Folios read *and lively lustra*.

SCENE II      TIMON OF ATHENS

---

And entertain'd me with mine own device:  
I am to thank you for 't.

FIRST LADY. My lord, you take us even at the best.

APEM. Faith, for the worst is filthy, and would not  
hold taking, I doubt me.

TIM. Ladies, there is an idle banquet attends you:  
Please you to dispose yourselves. 150

ALL LAD. Most thankfully, my lord.

*[Exeunt Cupid and Ladies.]*

TIM. Flavius!

FLAV. My lord?

TIM.                   The little casket bring me hither.

FLAV. Yes, my lord. *[Aside]* More jewels yet!

There is no crossing him in 's humour;  
Else I should tell him — well, i' faith, I should —  
When all's spent, he 'ld be cross'd then, an he could.

'T is pity bounty had not eyes behind,  
That man might ne'er be wretched for his mind. *[Exit.]*

FIRST LORD. Where be our men? 160

146 First Lady. *My lord, . . . best*] “My lord, you form the most favourable impression of us.” The line in the Folios was assigned to *1 Lord*, for which Johnson rightly substituted *1 Lady*.

148 *hold taking*] bear handling. There is a coarse innuendo. Cf. *2 Hen. IV*, IV, i, 161: “A rotten case abides no handling.”

157 *he'ld be cross'd then*] There is quibbling here. “To be crossed” sometimes means to be possessed of money or coins (which were stamped with crosses). The speaker means that Timon when all his money is spent would be glad to have money then as well as to have been crossed or thwarted in his prodigality now. Cf. *As you like it*, II, iv, 10: “I should bear *no cross*, if I did bear you.”

158 *'T is pity . . . behind*] sc. whereby she might see the miseries that pursue her.

SERV. Here, my lord, in readiness.

SEC. LORD. Our horses!

*Re-enter FLAVIUS, with the casket*

TIM. O my friends,  
I have one word to say to you: look you, my good lord,  
I must entreat you, honour me so much  
As to advance this jewel; accept it and wear it,  
Kind my lord.

FIRST LORD. I am so far already in your gifts, —

ALL. So are we all.

*Enter a Servant*

SERV. My lord, there are certain nobles of the senate  
newly alighted and come to visit you. 171

TIM. They are fairly welcome.

FLAV. I beseech your honour, vouchsafe me a word;  
it does concern you near.

TIM. Near! why, then, another time I'll hear thee:  
I prithee, let 's be provided to show them entertainment.

FLAV. [*Aside*] I scarce know how.

*Enter another Servant*

SEC. SERV. May it please your honour, Lord Lucius  
Out of his free love hath presented to you  
Four milk-white horses, trapp'd in silver. 180

TIM. I shall accept them fairly: let the presents  
Be worthily entertain'd.

166 *advance*] honour by wearing. Cf. I, i, 175, *supra*: "You mend the  
jewel by the wearing it."

181 *the presents*] the horses presented.

SCENE II      TIMON OF ATHENS

---

*Enter a third Servant*

How now! what news?

THIRD SERV. Please you, my lord, that honourable gentleman, Lord Lucullus, entreats your company tomorrow to hunt with him, and has sent your honour two brace of greyhounds.

TIM. I'll hunt with him; and let them be received, Not without fair reward.

FLAV.            [*Aside*] What will this come to?  
He commands us to provide and give great gifts, and all  
out of an empty coffer: 190

Nor will he know his purse, or yield me this,  
To show him what a beggar his heart is,  
Being of no power to make his wishes good:  
His promises fly so beyond his state  
That what he speaks is all in debt, he owes  
For every word: he is so kind that he now  
Pays interest for 't; his land 's put to their books.  
Well, would I were gently put out of office,  
Before I were forced out!  
Happier is he that has no friend to feed 200  
Than such that do e'en enemies exceed.  
I bleed inwardly for my lord. [*Exit.*

TIM.                            You do yourselves  
Much wrong, you bate too much of your own merits.  
Here, my lord, a trifle of our love.

SEC. LORD. With more than common thanks I will  
receive it.

---

194 *his state*] his estate, possessions and property.

THIRD LORD. O, he's the very soul of bounty!

TIM. And now I remember, my lord, you gave good words the other day of a bay courser I rode on. 'Tis yours, because you liked it. 210

THIRD LORD. O, I beseech you, pardon me, my lord, in that.

TIM. You may take my word, my lord; I know, no man can justly praise, but what he does affect: I weigh my friend's affection with mine own: I'll tell you true. I'll call to you.

ALL LORDS. O, none so welcome.

TIM. I take all and your several visitations  
So kind to heart, 't is not enough to give:  
Methinks, I could deal kingdoms to my friends, 220  
And ne'er be weary. Alcibiades,  
Thou art a soldier, therefore seldom rich;  
It comes in charity to thee: for all thy living  
Is 'mongst the dead, and all the lands thou hast  
Lie in a pitch'd field.

ALCIB. Ay, defiled land, my lord.

FIRST LORD. We are so virtuously bound —

TIM. And so am I to you.

SEC. LORD. So infinitely endear'd —

TIM. All to you. Lights, more lights! 230

216 *I'll call to you*] I'll summon you to my assistance at need.

220 *deal kingdoms*] deal out or distribute, like playing cards in a card game.

225-226 *a pitch'd field . . . defiled land*] The epithet "pitch'd," which, as applied to "field" means "fit for battle," punningly suggests the succeeding epithet "defiled"; cf. *1 Hen. IV*, II, iv, 401-402: "this *pitch*, as ancient writers do report, doth *defile*."

230 *All to you*] All happiness to you. Cf. *Macb.*, III, iv, 92: "*all to all*."



SCENE II      TIMON OF ATHENS

---

FIRST LORD. The best of happiness, honour and fortunes, keep with you, Lord Timon!

TIM. Ready for his friends.

[*Exeunt all but Apemantus and Timon.*]

APEM.

What a coil's here!

Serving of becks and jutting-out of bums!  
I doubt whether their legs be worth the sums  
That are given for 'em. Friendship's full of dregs:  
Methinks, false hearts should never have sound legs.  
Thus honest fools lay out their wealth on court'sies.

TIM. Now, Apemantus, if thou wert not sullen,  
I would be good to thee. 240

APEM. No, I'll nothing: for if I should be bribed too,  
there would be none left to rail upon thee; and then  
thou wouldst sin the faster. Thou givest so long, Timon,  
I fear me thou wilt give away thyself in paper shortly:  
what needs these feasts, pomps and vain-glories?

TIM. Nay, an you begin to rail on society once, I am  
sworn not to give regard to you. Farewell; and come  
with better music. [*Exit.*]

APEM. So: thou wilt not hear me now; thou shalt  
not then: I'll lock thy heaven from thee. 250

O, that men's ears should be  
To counsel deaf, but not to flattery! [*Exit.*]

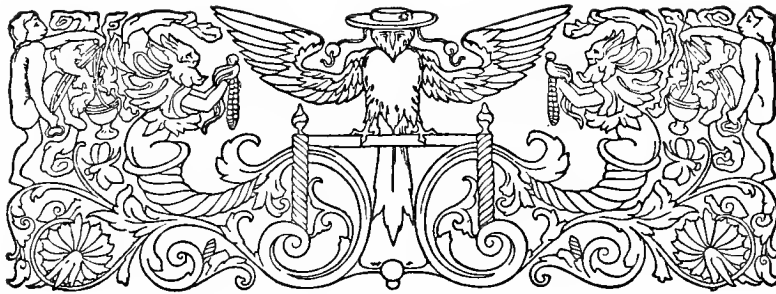
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234 *Serving of becks*] Offering of courtly salutations.

235 *their legs*] their courtly bows.

244 *give away thyself in paper*] be ruined by putting your name to paper bills.

250 *I'll lock thy heaven from thee*] I'll keep from you good counsel, which is your only salvation.



ACT SECOND — SCENE I

A SENATOR'S HOUSE

*Enter a Senator, with papers in his hand*

SENATOR



AND LATE FIVE THOU-  
sand: to Varro and to Isidore  
He owes nine thousand; besides  
my former sum,  
Which makes it five and twenty.  
Still in motion  
Of raging waste? It cannot  
hold; it will not.  
If I want gold, steal but a  
beggar's dog  
And give it Timon, why, the dog  
coins gold:  
If I would sell my horse and buy  
twenty moe

Better than he, why, give my horse to Timon;  
Ask nothing, give it him, it foals me straight

9-10 *it foals me . . . horses*] it brings forth foals straight away and able colts too. Thus the First and Second Folios. For *and able horses* Theobald awkwardly read *Ten able horse*.

SCENE I      TIMON OF ATHENS

---

And able horses: no porter at his gate, 10  
 But rather one that smiles and still invites  
 All that pass by. It cannot hold; no reason  
 Can found his state in safety. Caphis, ho!  
 Caphis, I say!

*Enter CAPHIS*

CAPH.      Here, sir; what is your pleasure?

SEN. Get on your cloak, and haste you to Lord  
 Timon;

Importune him for my moneys; be not ceased  
 With slight denial; nor then silenced, when —  
 “Commend me to your master” — and the cap  
 Plays in the right hand, thus: but tell him, 20  
 My uses cry to me, I must serve my turn  
 Out of mine own; his days and times are past,  
 And my reliances on his fracted dates  
 Have smit my credit: I love and honour him,  
 But must not break my back to heal his finger:  
 Immediate are my needs; and my relief  
 Must not be toss'd and turn'd to me in words,  
 But find supply immediate. Get you gone:

---

12-13 *no reason . . . safety*] reason can detect no safe or secure foundation of his fortune. Hanmer first substituted *found* for the First Folio reading *sound*, which is unintelligible. The First Folio has the same misreading at II, ii, 136, *infra*.

16 *be not ceased*] be not stayed or stopped. “Cease” is frequently found as a transitive verb.

20 *uses*] needs.

22 *on his fracted dates*] on his broken promises to pay by the dates fixed in his bond. Cf. II, ii, 42, *infra*: “date-broke bonds.”

Put on a most importunate aspect,  
 A visage of demand; for, I do fear,  
 When every feather sticks in his own wing, 30  
 Lord Timon will be left a naked gull,  
 Which flashes now a phoenix. Get you gone.

CAPH. I go, sir.

SEN. "I go, sir!" Take the bonds along with you,  
 And have the dates in compt.

CAPH. I will, sir.

SEN. Go. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II — A HALL IN TIMON'S HOUSE

*Enter FLAVIUS, with many bills in his hand*

FLAVIUS. No care, no stop! so senseless of expense,  
 That he will neither know how to maintain it,

30-32 *When every . . . phoenix*] When every one of his borrowed feathers is transferred to the wing to which it naturally belongs, Timon, who flashes now a phoenix, will be left a bare nestling. "His own" (in line 30) is "its own" and "Which" (in line 32) means "Who." "Gull" was sometimes used for a young bird (cf. *1 Hen. IV*, V, i, 60: "that ungentle gull the cuckoo's bird,") as well as in the sense of "dupe" or "simpleton."

35 *have the dates in compt*] look well at the dates in computing the interest due. Theobald's correction of the Folio reading *have the dates in. Come.*

SCENE II — *A hall in Timon's house*] Thus Rowe indicated the scene for the first time. But at line 91, *infra*, Apemantus tells the fool he will go with him "to Lord Timon's," words which suggest that the scene should take place in a courtyard outside Timon's house, rather than in a hall within it.

SCENE II      TIMON OF ATHENS

---

Nor cease his flow of riot: takes no account  
How things go from him; nor resumes no care  
Of what is to continue: never mind  
Was to be so unwise, to be so kind.  
What shall be done? he will not hear till feel:  
I must be round with him, now he comes from hunting.  
Fie, fie, fie, fie!

*Enter CAPHIS, with the Servants of ISIDORE and VARRO*

CAPH. Good even, Varro: what, you come for money? <sup>10</sup>

VAR. SERV. Is 't not your business too?

CAPH. It is: and yours too, Isidore?

ISID. SERV. It is so.

CAPH. Would we were all discharged!

VAR. SERV. I fear it.

CAPH. Here comes the lord.

*Enter TIMON, ALCIBIADES, Lords, and others*

TIM. So soon as dinner 's done, we'll forth again,  
My Alcibiades. With me? what is your will?

<sup>4</sup> *resumes*] assumes, takes. Rowe's correction of the Folio reading *resume*.

<sup>5-6</sup> *never mind . . . so kind*] no man's mind was ever shown to be so unwise by the doing of acts of kindness.

<sup>8</sup> *round*] blunt, outspoken.

<sup>10</sup> stage direction) *with the Servants . . . Varro*] Thus Johnson. The Folios read *Isidore and Varro*. In the following lines the servants of these two men are addressed by their masters' names. In the Folio stage directions of Act III, Sc. iv, *infra*, Lucius' servant is similarly introduced in the name of his master, although Varro's servant is there distinguished as "Varros man."

<sup>15</sup> *I fear it*] I doubt it.

CAPH. My lord, here is a note of certain dues.

TIM. Dues! Whence are you?

CAPH. Of Athens here, my lord. 20

TIM. Go to my steward.

CAPH. Please it your lordship, he hath put me off  
To the succession of new days this month:  
My master is awaked by great occasion  
To call upon his own, and humbly prays you  
That with your other noble parts you'll suit  
In giving him his right.

TIM. Mine honest friend,  
I prithee but repair to me next morning.

CAPH. Nay, good my lord, —

TIM. Contain thyself, good friend.

VAR. SERV. One Varro's servant, my good lord, — 30

ISID. SERV. From Isidore; he humbly prays your  
speedy payment.

CAPH. If you did know, my lord, my master's wants, —

VAR. SERV. 'T was due on forfeiture, my lord, six  
weeks and past.

ISID. SERV. Your steward puts me off, my lord, and I  
Am sent expressly to your lordship.

TIM. Give me breath.

I do beseech you, good my lords, keep on;

I'll wait upon you instantly. [*Exeunt Alcibiades, Lords, etc.*

[*To Flav.*] Come hither: pray you, 40

23 *To the succession . . . month*] Till the date of the new moon later  
in this month.

26 *That . . . you'll suit*] That you will behave in a manner consistent  
with your other noble qualities.

29 *Contain thyself*] Be calm.

SCENE II      TIMON OF ATHENS

---

How goes the world, that I am thus encounter'd  
With clamorous demands of date-broke bonds,  
And the detention of long-since-due debts,  
Against my honour?

FLAV.                      Please you, gentlemen,  
The time is unagreeable to this business:  
Your importunacy cease till after dinner,  
That I may make his lordship understand  
Wherefore you are not paid.

TIM. Do so, my friends. See them well entertain'd.

[Exit.

FLAV. Pray, draw near.

[Exit. 50

*Enter APEMANTUS and Fool*

CAPH. Stay, stay, here comes the fool with Apeman-  
tus: let's ha' some sport with 'em.

VAR. SERV. Hang him, he'll abuse us.

ISID. SERV. A plague upon him, dog!

VAR. SERV. How dost, fool?

APEM. Dost dialogue with thy shadow?

VAR. SERV. I speak not to thee.

APEM. No, 't is to thyself. [*To the Fool*] Come away.

ISID. SERV. There's the fool hangs on your back  
already.

---

42 *date-broke bonds*] Cf. "fracted dates," II, i, 22, *supra*. Steevens' emendation of *debt, broken bonds* of the Folios.

55 *How dost, fool?*] The fool is in the service of some well-known courtesan (see line 70, *infra*), and the circumstance gives point to much of the dialogue which follows. The page who enters at line 75, *infra*, belonged to the same questionable household.

APEM. No, thou stand'st single, thou 'rt not on him yet. 60

CAPH. Where's the fool now?

APEM. He last asked the question. Poor rogues, and usurers' men! bawds between gold and want!

ALL SERV. What are we, Apemantus?

APEM. Asses.

ALL SERV. Why?

APEM. That you ask me what you are, and do not know yourselves. Speak to 'em, fool.

FOOL. How do you, gentlemen?

ALL SERV. Gramercies, good fool: how does your 70 mistress?

FOOL. She's e'en setting on water to scald such chickens as you are. Would we could see you at Corinth!

APEM. Good! gramercy.

*Enter Page*

FOOL. Look you, here comes my mistress' page.

PAGE. [*To the Fool*] Why, how now, captain! what do you in this wise company? How dost thou, Apemantus?

APEM. Would I had a rod in my mouth, that I might answer thee profitably.

72-73 *She's e'en setting . . . as you are*] She is preparing to fleece such innocents as you. There is a double allusion to the practice of plunging a freshly killed chicken into saucepans of boiling water before plucking them, and to the sweating tubs which were employed in the cure of venereal diseases.

73 *Corinth*] here used for a brothel. Milton in his *Apology for Smectymnuus* (1847, Works 81-82) calls dwellers in a brothel "young Corinthian laity."

75 *mistress'*] Theobald's correction of the Folio *Masters*. Cf. line 103, *infra*, where *Masters* is again read by the Folios for *Mistress'*.



SCENE II      TIMON OF ATHENS

---

PAGE. Prithee, Apemantus, read me the superscription 80  
of these letters: I know not which is which.

APEM. Canst not read?

PAGE. No.

APEM. There will little learning die then, that day  
thou art hang'd. This is to Lord Timon; this to Alcibi-  
ades. Go; thou wast born a bastard, and thou'lt die a  
bawd.

PAGE. Thou wast whelped a dog, and thou shalt  
famish a dog's death. Answer not, I am gone. [*Exit.*]

APEM. E'en so thou outrun'st grace. Fool, I will go 90  
with you to Lord Timon's.

FOOL. Will you leave me there?

APEM. If Timon stay at home. You three serve  
three usurers?

ALL SERV. Ay; would they served us!

APEM. So would I, — as good a trick as ever hang-  
man served thief.

FOOL. Are you three usurers' men?

ALL SERV. Ay, fool.

99

FOOL. I think no usurer but has a fool to his servant:  
my mistress is one, and I am her fool. When men come  
to borrow of your masters, they approach sadly and go  
away merry; but they enter my mistress' house merrily  
and go away sadly: the reason of this?

VAR. SERV. I could render one.

---

90-91 *I will go . . . Lord Timon's*] See note on the place of SCENE ii,  
*supra.*

103 *mistress*] Theobald's correction of the Folio *Masters*; cf. line 75,  
*supra.*

APEM. Do it then, that we may account thee a whoremaster and a knave; which notwithstanding, thou shalt be no less esteemed.

VAR. SERV. What is a whoremaster, fool? 109

FOOL. A fool in good clothes, and something like thee. 'T is a spirit: sometime 't appears like a lord; sometime like a lawyer; sometime like a philosopher, with two stones moe than 's artificial one: he is very often like a knight; and, generally, in all shapes that man goes up and down in from fourscore to thirteen, this spirit walks in.

VAR. SERV. Thou art not altogether a fool.

FOOL. Nor thou altogether a wise man: as much foolery as I have, so much wit thou lack'st.

APEM. That answer might have become Apemantus.

ALL. SERV. Aside, aside; here comes Lord Timon. 120

*Re-enter TIMON and FLAVIUS*

APEM. Come with me, fool, come.

FOOL. I do not always follow lover, elder brother, and woman; sometime the philosopher.

*[Exeunt Apemantus and Fool.]*

FLAV. Pray you, walk near: I'll speak with you anon.

*[Exeunt Servants.]*

TIM. You make me marvel; wherefore, ere this time, Had you not fully laid my state before me, That I might so have rated my expense As I had leave of means?

113 *moe than's artificial one*] The philosopher's stone which might transmute base metals into gold was the great aim of alchemical research.

Cf. 2 *Hen. IV*, III, ii, 320.

127 *rated*] calculated or apportioned.

SCENE II      TIMON OF ATHENS

---

FLAV.                                      You would not hear me,  
At many leisuress I proposed.

TIM.    Go to:    130  
Perchance some single vantages you took,  
When my indisposition put you back;  
And that unaptness made your minister,  
Thus to excuse yourself.

FLAV.    O my good lord,  
At many times I brought in my accounts,  
Laid them before you; you would throw them off,  
And say, you found them in mine honesty.  
When for some trifling present you have bid me  
Return so much, I have shook my head and wept;  
Yea, 'gainst the authority of manners pray'd you  
To hold your hand more close: I did endure    140  
Not seldom nor no slight checks, when I have  
Prompted you in the ebb of your estate  
And your great flow of debts. My loved lord,  
Though you hear now, too late! — yet now's a  
  time —

---

132 *And . . . minister*] And made that irresponsiveness or disinclination minister to your purpose.

136 *found*] The First Folio has the misprint *sound* as in II, i, 13, *supra*.

138 *so much*] such and such a sum.

144 *Though you . . . a time*] Thus the Folios. Hanmer suggested *Though you hear now, yet now's too late a time*, which is in agreement with the succeeding statement that Timon's assets reckoned at full are less than a half of his liabilities. If *yet now's a time* be retained, the meaning may be that though you now at last ("too late") listen to my remonstrances, yet it is now at a hopeless time (when recovery is impossible seeing that, etc.).

The greatest of your having lacks a half  
To pay your present debts.

TIM. Let all my land be sold.

FLAV. 'T is all engaged, some forfeited and gone,  
And what remains will hardly stop the mouth  
Of present dues: the future comes apace:  
What shall defend the interim? and at length 150  
How goes our reckoning?

TIM. To Lacedæmon did my land extend.

FLAV. O my good lord, the world is but a word:  
Were it all yours to give it in a breath,  
How quickly were it gone!

TIM. You tell me true.

FLAV. If you suspect my husbandry or falsehood,  
Call me before the exactest auditors,  
And set me on the proof. So the gods bless me,  
When all our offices have been oppress'd  
With riotous feeders, when our vaults have wept 160

145 *having*] wealth, property; so V, i, 16, *infra*.

147 *engaged*] pledged.

150-151 *and at length . . . reckoning?*] and what a wretched plight will result from the final settlement!

153 *a word*] Thus the First Folio, for which the later Folios awkwardly substitute *a world*. Flavius, of course, means that "world" is, after all, a mere word, and can be given away in a breath.

156 *If . . . falsehood*] If you suspect my economic management, or suspect me of dishonesty. The conjectural emendation of *falsehood* for or *falsehood* simplifies the sense.

159-160 *When all . . . feeders*] When all our domestic offices or apartments (*i. e.*, kitchens, stables, and storerooms) have been overwhelmed by riotous parasites. "Feeders," however, is sometimes applied to servants in great houses.



To think I shall lack friends? Secure thy heart;  
 If I would broach the vessels of my love,  
 And try the argument of hearts by borrowing,  
 Men and men's fortunes could I frankly use 180  
 As I can bid thee speak.

FLAV. Assurance bless your thoughts!

TIM. And in some sort these wants of mine are  
 crown'd,

That I account them blessings; for by these  
 Shall I try friends: you shall perceive how you  
 Mistake my fortunes; I am wealthy in my friends.  
 Within there! Flaminius! Servilius!

*Enter FLAMINIUS, SERVILIUS, and other Servants*

SERVANTS. My lord? my lord?

TIM. I will dispatch you severally: you to Lord Lu-  
 cius: to Lord Lucullus you: I hunted with his honour  
 to-day: you to Sempronius: commend me to their loves;  
 and, I am proud, say, that my occasions have found  
 time to use 'em toward a supply of money: let the re-  
 quest be fifty talents. 193

FLAM. As you have said, my Lord.

177 *Secure thy heart*] Make thy heart easy.

179 *try the argument of hearts*] test what hearts contain. The preliminary statement of the contents of a book was commonly known as "the argument."

182 *are crown'd*] are dignified, are made honourable.

184 *try*] test.

186 *Flaminius*] Rowe's correction of the Folio error *Flavius*.

Stage Direction] *Enter Flaminius . . . servants*] Rowe's expansion of the Folio stage direction *Enter three servants*.

SCENE II      TIMON OF ATHENS

---

FLAV. [*Aside*] Lord Lucius and Lucullus? hum!

TIM. Go you, sir, to the senators —  
Of whom, even to the state's best health, I have  
Deserved this hearing — bid 'em send o' the instant  
A thousand talents to me.

FLAV.                            I have been bold,  
For that I knew it the most general way,                        200  
To them to use your signet and your name,  
But they do shake their heads, and I am here  
No richer in return.

TIM.                            Is't true? can't be?

FLAV. They answer, in a joint and corporate voice,  
That now they are at fall, want treasure, cannot  
Do what they would; are sorry — you are honourable, —  
But yet they could have wish'd — they know not —  
Something hath been amiss — a noble nature  
May catch a wrench — would all were well — 't is  
    pity: —  
And so, intending other serious matters,                        210  
After distasteful looks and these hard fractions,  
With certain half-caps and cold-moving nods  
They froze me into silence.

---

200 *most general way*] most compendious, or customary, way.

205 *at fall*] at the ebb, on the decline.

209 *catch a wrench*] go astray; get into difficulties.

210 *intending*] pretending; a common usage. Cf. *Rich. III*, III, v, 8:

“*Intending* deep suspicion.”

211 *hard fractions*] harsh fragmentary or abrupt remarks.

212 *With . . . nods*] With the harest of salutations and chilling nods;

“half-caps” means “caps barely touched in the way of courtesy”;

“cap” is often used for “salute.”

TIM. You gods, reward them!  
Prithee, man, look cheerly. These old fellows  
Have their ingratitude in them hereditary:  
Their blood is caked, 't is cold, it seldom flows;  
'T is lack of kindly warmth they are not kind;  
And nature, as it grows again toward earth,  
Is fashion'd for the journey, dull and heavy.  
[*To a Serv.*] Go to Ventidius. [*To Flav.*] Prithee, be not  
sad; 220

Thou art true and honest; ingeniously I speak,  
No blame belongs to thee. [*To Serv.*] Ventidius lately  
Buried his father, by whose death he's stepp'd  
Into a great estate: when he was poor,  
Imprison'd, and in scarcity of friends,  
I clear'd him with five talents: greet him from me;  
Bid him suppose some good necessity  
Touches his friend, which craves to be remember'd  
With those five talents. [*Exit Serv.*] [*To Flav.*] That had,  
give't these fellows  
To whom 't is instant due. Ne'er speak or think 230  
That Timon's fortunes 'mong his friends can sink.

FLAV. I would I could not think it: that thought is  
bounty's foe;  
Being free itself, it thinks all others so. [*Exeunt.*]

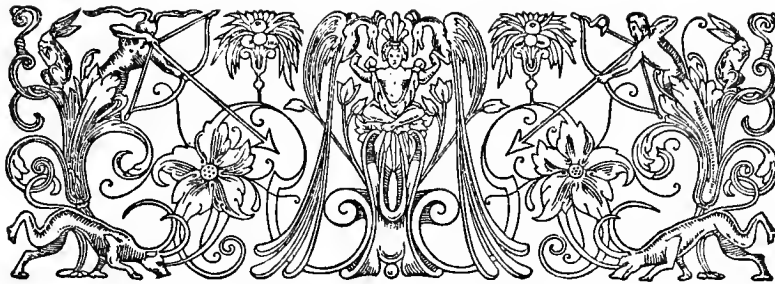
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221 *ingeniously*] The word here and elsewhere is used in much the same sense as "ingenuously," which is substituted in the Fourth Folio (for *ingeniously* of the three earlier Folios). The two forms are often found quite indiscriminately.

227 *good necessity*] honest and genuine need.

233 *free*] liberal, generous.



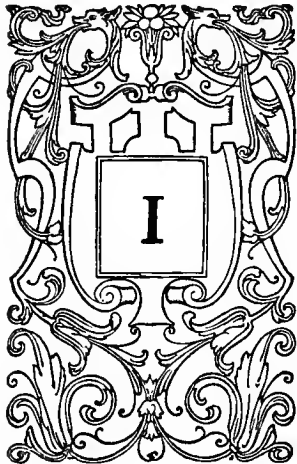


ACT THIRD — SCENE I

A ROOM IN LUCULLUS'S HOUSE

FLAMINIUS *waiting. Enter a Servant to him*

SERVANT



HAVE TOLD MY LORD  
of you; he is coming down to  
you.

FLAM. I thank you, sir.

*Enter LUCULLUS*

SERV. Here's my lord.

LUCUL. [*Aside*] One of Lord  
Timon's men? a gift, I warrant.  
Why, this hits right; I dreamt  
of a silver basin and ewer to-  
night. Flaminius, honest Fla-  
minius; you are very respectfully  
welcome, sir. Fill me some wine. [*Exit Servant.*] And  
how does that honourable, complete, free-hearted gen-  
tleman of Athens, thy very bountiful good lord and  
master?

<sup>8</sup> *very respectfully*] with great respect.

FLAM. His health is well, sir.

LUCUL. I am right glad that his health is well, sir: and what hast thou there under thy cloak, pretty Flaminius?

FLAM. Faith, nothing but an empty box, sir; which, in my lord's behalf, I come to entreat your honour to supply; who, having great and instant occasion to use fifty talents, hath sent to your lordship to furnish him, nothing doubting your present assistance therein. 20

LUCUL. La, la, la, la! "nothing doubting," says he? Alas, good lord! a noble gentleman 't is, if he would not keep so good a house. Many a time and often I ha' dined with him, and told him on't; and come again to supper to him, of purpose to have him spend less; and yet he would embrace no counsel, take no warning by my coming. Every man has his fault, and honesty is his: I ha' told him on't, but I could ne'er get him from 't.

*Re-enter Servant, with wine*

SERV. Please your lordship, here is the wine. 30

LUCUL. Flaminius, I have noted thee always wise. Here's to thee.

FLAM. Your lordship speaks your pleasure.

LUCUL. I have observed thee always for a towardly prompt spirit — give thee thy due — and one that knows what belongs to reason; and canst use the time well, if the time use thee well: good parts in thee. [*To Serv.*]

---

19 *talents*] here incorrectly used in the sense of a coin of about a pound's value. See note on I, i, 98, *supra*.

27 *honesty*] generosity.

SCENE I            TIMON OF ATHENS

---

Get you gone, sirrah. [*Exit Serv.*] Draw nearer, honest  
Flaminius. Thy lord's a bountiful gentleman: but thou  
art wise; and thou knowest well enough, although thou 40  
comest to me, that this is no time to lend money,  
especially upon bare friendship, without security. Here's  
three solidares for thee: good boy, wink at me, and say  
thou saw'st me not. Fare thee well.

FLAM. Is't possible the world should so much differ,  
And we alive that lived? Fly, damned baseness,  
To him that worships thee! [*Throwing back the money.*

LUCUL. Ha! now I see thou art a fool, and fit for  
thy master. [*Exit.*

FLAM. May these add to the number that may scald  
thee! 50

Let molten coin be thy damnation,  
Thou disease of a friend, and not himself!  
Has friendship such a faint and milky heart,  
It turns in less than two nights? O you gods,

---

43 *solidares*] coins of small value. The word is not known elsewhere.

It seems to be crudely compounded of "solidus" and "denarius."  
Shakespeare may have confused "soldo," an Italian coin worth  
about a shilling, with "solidus," a gold coin of the later Roman  
empire worth about twelve shillings.

45-46 *the world . . . that lived*] the world should undergo so much  
change and we who were living in the old state should still be living in  
the new.

51 *Let molten coin be thy damnation*] It was a common belief that the  
covetous and avaricious were punished in hell by having molten coin  
poured down their throats.

52 *Thou disease of a friend*] Cf. *Lear*, II, iv, 220-221: "my daughter;  
Or rather a *disease* that's in my flesh."

I feel my master's passion! this slave,  
Unto his honour, has my lord's meat in him:  
Why should it thrive and turn to nutriment,  
When he is turn'd to poison?  
O, may diseases only work upon't!  
And, when he's sick to death, let not that part of  
nature 60  
Which my lord paid for, be of any power  
To expel sickness, but prolong his hour! [Exit.

## SCENE II — A PUBLIC PLACE

*Enter LUCIUS, with three Strangers*

LUC. Who, the Lord Timon? he is my very good friend, and an honourable gentleman.

FIRST STRAN. We know him for no less, though we are but strangers to him. But I can tell you one thing, my lord, and which I hear from common rumours: now Lord Timon's happy hours are done and past, and his estate shrinks from him.

LUC. Fie, no, do not believe it; he cannot want for money.

SEC. STRAN. But believe you this, my lord, that not 10  
long ago one of his men was with the Lord Lucullus to

55 *passion*] anguish.

56 *Unto his honour*] By way of adding to his repute. Lucullus has derived honour from having fed at Timon's table.

62 *his hour*] its hour, the hour of sickness.

SCENE II      TIMON OF ATHENS

---

borrow so many talents; nay, urged extremely for't, and showed what necessity belonged to't, and yet was denied.

LUC. How!

SEC. STRAN. I tell you, denied, my lord.

LUC. What a strange case was that! now, before the gods, I am ashamed on't. Denied that honourable man! there was very little honour showed in't. For my own part, I must needs confess, I have received some small kindnesses from him, as money, plate, jewels, and <sup>20</sup> such-like trifles, nothing comparing to his; yet, had he mistook him and sent to me, I should ne'er have denied his occasion so many talents.

*Enter SERVILIUS*

SER. See, by good hap, yonder's my lord; I have sweat to see his honour. My honoured lord!

LUC. Servilius! you are kindly met, sir. Fare thee well: commend me to thy honourable virtuous lord, my very exquisite friend.

SER. May it please your honour, my lord hath sent —

LUC. Ha! what has he sent? I am so much endeared <sup>30</sup> to that lord; he's ever sending; how shall I thank him, think'st thou? And what has he sent now?

SER. Has only sent his present occasion now, my

---

12 *so many*] Thus the Folios. Theobald substituted *fifty*, the sum mentioned III, ii, 19, *supra*; cf. line 23, *infra*.

21-22 *had he mistook him and sent to me*] had Timon realized that he had misapprehended Lucullus, and had applied to me instead.

lord; requesting your lordship to supply his instant use with so many talents.

LUC. I know his lordship is but merry with me; He cannot want fifty five hundred talents.

SER. But in the mean time he wants less, my lord. If his occasion were not virtuous,  
I should not urge it half so faithfully. 40

LUC. Dost thou speak seriously, Servilius?

SER. Upon my soul, 't is true, sir.

LUC. What a wicked beast was I to disfurnish myself against such a good time, when I might ha' shown myself honourable! how unluckily it happened, that I should purchase the day before for a little part, and undo a great deal of honour! Servilius, now, before the gods, I am not able to do — the more beast, I say: — I was sending to use Lord Timon myself, these gentlemen can witness; but I would not, for the wealth of Athens, 50 I had done 't now. Commend me bountifully to his good lordship; and I hope his honour will conceive the fairest of me, because I have no power to be kind: and tell him this from me, I count it one of my greatest afflictions, say, that I cannot pleasure such an honourable

37 *fifty five hundred talents*] See note on III, i, 19, *supra*. Lucius is ironically suggesting that Timon cannot be without (*i. e.*, must be worth) any number of talents.

39 *If his occasion were not virtuous*] If his need were not due to reputable causes. Cf. II, ii, 227, *supra*.

40 *faithfully*] zealously.

45-47 *that I should purchase . . . honour*] that I should make a bargain which brought me an insignificant degree of honour, and thus forego the present opportunity of acquiring a great deal of honour.

SCENE II          TIMON OF ATHENS

gentleman. Good Servilius, will you befriend me so far as to use mine own words to him?

SER. Yes, sir, I shall.

LUC. I'll look you out a good turn, Servilius.

[*Exit Servilius.*]

True, as you said, Timon is shrunk indeed; 60  
 And he that's once denied will hardly speed. [*Exit.*]

FIRST STRAN. Do you observe this, Hostilius?

SEC. STRAN. Ay, too well.

FIRST STRAN. Why, this is the world's soul; and  
 just of the same piece

Is every flatterer's spirit. Who can call him  
 His friend that dips in the same dish? for, in  
 My knowing, Timon has been this lord's father,  
 And kept his credit with his purse;  
 Supported his estate; nay, Timon's money  
 Has paid his men their wages: he ne'er drinks,  
 But Timon's silver treads upon his lip; 70  
 And yet — O, see the monstrousness of man  
 When he looks out in an ungrateful shape! —  
 He does deny him, in respect of his,  
 What charitable men afford to beggars.

THIRD STRAN. Religion groans at it.

FIRST STRAN. For mine own part,  
 I never tasted Timon in my life,  
 Nor came any of his bounties over me,  
 To mark me for his friend; yet, I protest,

64 *spirit*] Theobald's substitution for the Folio reading *spout*, which is difficult to explain.

73 *in respect of his*] in comparison with Lucius' own fortune. Lucius is so rich that Timon's demand is for him a mere beggar's pittance.

For his right noble mind, illustrious virtue,  
 And honourable carriage, 80  
 Had his necessity made use of me,  
 I would have put my wealth into donation,  
 And the best half should have return'd to him,  
 So much I love his heart: but, I perceive,  
 Men must learn now with pity to dispense;  
 For policy sits above conscience. [*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE III — A ROOM IN SEMPRONIUS' HOUSE

*Enter SEMPRONIUS, and a Servant of TIMON'S*

SEM. Must he needs trouble me in't, — hum! —  
 'bove all others?

He might have tried Lord Lucius or Lucullus;  
 And now Ventidius is wealthy too,  
 Whom he redeem'd from prison: all these  
 Owe their estates unto him.

SERV. My lord,  
 They have all been touch'd and found base metal, for  
 They have all denied him.

SEM. How! have they denied him?  
 Has Ventidius and Lucullus denied him?

---

82-83 *I would have put . . . to him*] I would have treated the whole of my wealth as a fund for distribution, and bestowed the greater part of it on him. "Have return'd to" does not mean here "have been given back to," but "have fallen to him." Cf. *Hamlet*, I, i, 91-94: "a moiety . . . had *return'd* [*i. e.*, fallen] *To* . . . Fortinbras, Had he been vanquisher."

6 *touch'd*] tried or tested by the touchstone.



SCENE III TIMON OF ATHENS

And does he send to me? Three? hum!  
 It shows but little love or judgement in him: 10  
 Must I be his last refuge? His friends, like physicians,  
 Thrive, give him over: must I take the cure upon me?  
 Has much disgraced me in't; I'm angry at him,  
 That might have known my place: I see no sense for't,  
 But his occasions might have woo'd me first;  
 For, in my conscience, I was the first man  
 That e'er received gift from him:  
 And does he think so backwardly of me now,  
 That I'll requite it last? No:  
 So it may prove an argument of laughter 20  
 To the rest, and 'mongst lords I be thought a fool.  
 I'd rather than the worth of thrice the sum,  
 Had sent to me first, but for my mind's sake;  
 I'd such a courage to do him good. But now return,  
 And with their faint reply this answer join;  
 Who bates mine honour shall not know my coin. [*Exit.*  
 SERV. Excellent! Your lordship's a goodly villain.  
 The devil knew not what he did when he made man  
 politic; he crossed himself by't: and I cannot think but

12 *Thrive, give him over*] Thus the First Folio. The later Folios read *That thriv'd, give him over*. Johnson ingeniously substituted *Thrice give him over*. Cf. Webster's *Duchess of Malfi*, III, v, 11-13: "*Physicians thus With their hands full of money, use to give o'er Their patients.*"

20 *an argument of laughter*] a theme for laughter.

29-30 *he crossed himself by't . . . set him clear*] he defeated his own purposes; and I cannot but think that in the end man's own villainies will set him clear or free of the power of the devil (who will be beaten at his own game in the long run, or outdone with his own weapons).

in the end the villanies of man will set him clear. How <sup>30</sup>  
fairly this lord strives to appear foul! takes virtuous  
copies to be wicked; like those that under hot ardent  
zeal would set whole realms on fire:

Of such a nature is his politic love.

This was my lord's best hope; now all are fled,

Save only the gods: now his friends are dead,

Doors, that were ne'er acquainted with their wards

Many a bounteous year, must be employ'd

Now to guard sure their master.

And this is all a liberal course allows;

40

Who cannot keep his wealth must keep his house. [*Exit.*]

## SCENE IV — A HALL IN TIMON'S HOUSE

*Enter two Servants of VARRO, and the Servant of LUCIUS, meeting  
TITUS, HORTENSIUS, and other Servants of TIMON'S creditors,  
waiting his coming out*

FIRST VAR. SERV. Well met; good morrow, Titus  
and Hortensius.

TIT. The like to you, kind Varro.

HOR.

Lucius!

What, do we meet together?

LUC. SERV.

Ay, and I think

31-32 *takes virtuous copies to be wicked*] sets models or patterns of virtue before him so as to avoid following them, so as, contrarily, to be wicked.

32-33 *like those . . . on fire*] Allusion has been detected here to the perilous fanaticism of the convinced Puritan or Anabaptist.

37 *wards*] bolts, locks.

41 *keep his house*] keep within doors (for fear of duns).

SCENE IV      TIMON OF ATHENS

---

One business does command us all; for mine  
Is money.

TIT. So is theirs and ours.

*Enter PHILOTUS*

LUC. SERV.                      And Sir Philotus too!

PHI. Good day at once.

LUC. SERV.                      Welcome, good brother.

What do you think the hour?

PHI.                              Labouring for nine.

LUC. SERV. So much?

PHI.                              Is not my lord seen yet?

LUC. SERV.                      Not yet.

PHI. I wonder on't; he was wont to shine at seven. 10

LUC. SERV. Ay, but the days are wax'd shorter with  
him:

You must consider that a prodigal course  
Is like the sun's; but not, like his, recoverable.

I fear

'T is deepest winter in Lord Timon's purse;  
That is, one may reach deep enough and yet  
Find little.

PHI. I am of your fear for that.

TIT. I'll show you how to observe a strange event.  
Your lord sends now for money.

HOR.                              Most true, he does.

TIT. And he wears jewels now of Timon's gift, 20  
For which I wait for money.

HOR. It is against my heart.

LUC. SERV.                      Mark, how strange it shows,

---

13 *like the sun's*] an allusion to the setting of the sun.

Timon in this should pay more than he owes:  
And e'en as if your lord should wear rich jewels,  
And send for money for 'em.

HOR. I'm weary of this charge, the gods can witness:  
I know my lord hath spent of Timon's wealth,  
And now ingratitude makes it worse than stealth.

FIRST VAR. SERV. Yes, mine's three thousand crowns:  
what's yours?

LUC. SERV. Five thousand mine. 30

FIRST VAR. SERV. 'T is much deep: and it should  
seem by the sum

Your master's confidence was above mine;  
Else, surely, his had equall'd.

*Enter FLAMINIUS*

TIT. One of Lord Timon's men.

LUC. SERV. Flaminius! Sir, a word: pray, is my  
lord ready to come forth?

FLAM. No, indeed he is not.

TIT. We attend his lordship: pray, signify so much.

FLAM. I need not tell him that; he knows you are  
too diligent. [*Exit.* 40

*Enter FLAVIUS in a cloak, muffled*

LUC. SERV. Ha! is not that his steward muffled so?  
He goes away in a cloud: call him, call him.

TIT. Do you hear, sir?

26 *of this charge*] of this employment or office.

31 *much deep*] very large.

32-33 *Your master's . . . equall'd*] Your master had greater confidence  
in Timon than my master had. Otherwise my master's loan to him  
would have been as large as your master's.

SCENE IV TIMON OF ATHENS

---

SEC. VAR. SERV. By your leave, sir, —

FLAV. What do ye ask of me, my friend?

TIT. We wait for certain money here, sir.

FLAV. Ay,

If money were as certain as your waiting,

'T were sure enough.

Why then preferr'd you not your sums and bills,

When your false masters eat of my lord's meat? 50

Then they could smile and fawn upon his debts,

And take down the interest into their gluttonous maws.

You do yourselves but wrong to stir me up;

Let me pass quietly:

Believe't, my lord and I have made an end;

I have no more to reckon, he to spend.

LUC. SERV. Ay, but this answer will not serve.

FLAV. If 't will not serve, 't is not so base as you;

For you serve knaves. [Exit.

FIRST VAR. SERV. How! what does his cashiered 60  
worship mutter?

SEC. VAR. SERV. No matter what; he's poor, and  
that's revenge enough. Who can speak broader than  
he that has no house to put his head in? such may rail  
against great buildings.

*Enter SERVILIUS*

TIT. O, here's Servilius; now we shall know some  
answer.

SER. If I might beseech you, gentlemen, to repair  
some other hour, I should derive much from't; for,

63 *Who can speak broader*] Who can speak more freely.

take't of my soul, my lord leans wondrously to discon- 70  
tent: his comfortable temper has forsook him; he's  
much out of health and keeps his chamber.

LUC. SERV. Many do keep their chambers are not  
sick:

And if it be so far beyond his health,  
Methinks he should the sooner pay his debts,  
And make a clear way to the gods.

SER. Good gods!

TIT. We cannot take this for answer, sir.

FLAM. [*Within*] Servilius, help! My lord! my lord!

*Enter TIMON, in a rage; FLAMINIUS following*

TIM. What, are my doors opposed against my passage?  
Have I been ever free, and must my house 80  
Be my retentive enemy, my gaol?  
The place which I have feasted, does it now,  
Like all mankind, show me an iron heart?

LUC. SERV. Put in now, Titus.

TIT. My lord, here is my bill.

LUC. SERV. Here's mine.

HOR. And mine, my lord.

BOTH VAR. SERV. And ours, my lord.

74 *if it be so far beyond his health*] if it be that he is so far removed from health.

76 *make a clear way to the gods*] make his passage to heaven secure.

81 *my retentive enemy*] my enemy which keeps me prisoner.

87-88 *And mine, my lord . . . my lord*] The First Folio assigns the first of these two speeches to "1 Var.," *i. e.*, Varro's first servant, and the second speech to "2 Var.," *i. e.*, Varro's second servant. Capell gave the first speech to Hortensius, and Malone the second speech to the two servants of Varro speaking together. Both changes are necessary.

SCENE IV      TIMON OF ATHENS

---

PHI. All our bills.

TIM. Knock me down with 'em: cleave me to the girdle. 90

LUC. SERV. Alas, my lord, —

TIM. Cut my heart in sums.

TIT. Mine, fifty talents.

TIM. Tell out my blood.

LUC. SERV. Five thousand crowns, my lord.

TIM. Five thousand drops pays that. What yours? —  
and yours?

FIRST VAR. SERV. My lord, —

SEC. VAR. SERV. My lord, —

TIM. Tear me, take me, and the gods fall upon  
you! [Exit. 101

HOR. Faith, I perceive our masters may throw their  
caps at their money: these debts may well be called  
desperate ones, for a madman owes 'em. [Exeunt.

*Re-enter TIMON and FLAVIUS*

TIM. They have e'en put my breath from me, the  
slaves. Creditors? devils!

FLAV. My dear lord, —

TIM. What if it should be so?

FLAV. My lord, —

TIM. I'll have it so. My steward! 110

FLAV. Here, my lord.

---

90 *Knock me down with 'em*] There is a pun on the word "bills" (line 89),  
which meant not only paper accounts but the halberds or weapons  
carried by constables and others.

92 *in sums*] into sums of money.

102-103 *may throw . . . money*] may go hang for their money; a con-  
temptuous colloquialism.

TIM. So fitly? Go, bid all my friends again,  
Lucius, Lucullus, and Sempronius: all:  
I'll once more feast the rascals.

FLAV. O my lord,  
You only speak from your distracted soul;  
There is not so much left, to furnish out  
A moderate table.

TIM. Be it not in thy care;  
Go,  
I charge thee, invite them all: let in the tide  
Of knaves once more; my cook and I'll provide. 120  
*[Exeunt.]*

## SCENE V — THE SENATE-HOUSE

*The Senate sitting*

FIRST SEN. My lord, you have my voice to it; the  
fault's  
Bloody; 't is necessary he should die:  
Nothing emboldens sin so much as mercy.

SEC. SEN. Most true; the law shall bruise him.

113 *Sempronius: all*] Thus the Third and Fourth Folios. The Second Folio has the misprint *Semprovius: All*. The First Folio presents the puzzling and unmetrical reading *Sempronius Vllorxa: All*. No satisfactory explanation of *Vllorxa* has been offered. It is possibly the printer's helpless attempt to present some word or words imperfectly erased in the manuscript, such as *All lords*. Small reliance can be placed on the suggestion that it is a corruption of some combination of the Roman numerals VII and X, *i. e.*, "VII or X or" which has been explained as "seven or ten others." The better plan is to follow the example of the Second, Third, and Fourth Folios, and ignore the word.

1 *my voice*] my vote.

4 *him*] Hanmer's correction of the Folio 'em.



*Enter* ALCIBIADES, *attended*

ALCIB. Honour, health, and compassion to the senate !

FIRST SEN. Now, captain ?

ALCIB. I am an humble suitor to your virtues ;  
 For pity is the virtue of the law,  
 And none but tyrants use it cruelly.                    10  
 It pleases time and fortune to lie heavy  
 Upon a friend of mine, who in hot blood  
 Hath stepp'd into the law, which is past depth  
 To those that without heed do plunge into 't.  
 He is a man, setting his fate aside,  
 Of comely virtues :  
 Nor did he soil the fact with cowardice —  
 An honour in him which buys out his fault —  
 But with a noble fury and fair spirit,  
 Seeing his reputation touch'd to death,  
 He did oppose his foe:                    20  
 And with such sober and unnoted passion  
 He did behave his anger, ere 't was spent,  
 As if he had but proved an argument.

FIRST SEN. You undergo too strict a paradox,  
 Striving to make an ugly deed look fair :

---

14 *setting his fate aside*] setting aside his evil fortune.

17 *buys out*] redeems.

21 *unnoted*] unnoticeable, imperceptible.

22 *behave*] Rowe's correction of the Folio reading *behoove*. "Behave" was occasionally used as a transitive verb in the sense of "make behave," "control." Cf. Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, II, iii, 40: "But who . . . his mynd *Behaves* [*i. e.*, controls] with cares."

24 *You undergo . . . paradox*] You undertake too difficult a paradox.

Your words have took such pains, as if they labour'd  
 To bring manslaughter into form, and set quarrelling  
 Upon the head of valour; which indeed  
 Is valour misbegot and came into the world  
 When sects and factions were newly born: 30  
 He's truly valiant that can wisely suffer  
 The worst that man can breathe, and make his wrongs  
 His outsides, to wear them like his raiment, carelessly,  
 And ne'er prefer his injuries to his heart,  
 To bring it into danger.  
 If wrongs be evils and enforce us kill,  
 What folly 't is to hazard life for ill!

ALCIB. My lord, —

FIRST SEN. You cannot make gross sins look clear:  
 To revenge is no valour, but to bear.

ALCIB. My lords, then, under favour, pardon me, 40  
 If I speak like a captain.

Why do fond men expose themselves to battle,  
 And not endure all threats? sleep upon 't,  
 And let the foes quietly cut their throats,  
 Without repugnancy? If there be  
 Such valour in the bearing, what make we  
 Abroad? why then women are more valiant  
 That stay at home, if bearing carry it;

32 *breathe*] utter.

33 *His outsides*] Things that do not touch him inwardly.

34 *ne'er prefer . . . heart*] never take the injuries done him to heart,  
 never cherishes heartfelt resentment.

45 *Without repugnancy*] Without resistance.

48 *if bearing carry it*] if mere suffering of wrong carry the day, win the  
 victory.

SCENE V                      TIMON OF ATHENS

And the ass more captain than the lion, the felon  
 Loaden with irons wiser than the judge,                      50  
 If wisdom be in suffering. O my lords,  
 As you are great, be pitifully good:  
 Who cannot condemn rashness in cold blood?  
 To kill, I grant, is sin's extremest gust;  
 But in defence, by mercy, 't is most just.  
 To be in anger is impiety;  
 But who is man that is not angry?  
 Weigh but the crime with this.

SEC. SEN. You breathe in vain.

ALCIB.                                      In vain! His service done  
 At Lacedæmon and Byzantium                                      60  
 Were a sufficient briber for his life.

FIRST SEN. What's that?

ALCIB.                      I say, my lords, has done fair service,  
 And slain in fight many of your enemies:  
 How full of valour did he bear himself  
 In the last conflict, and made plenteous wounds!

---

49 *the felon*] Thus Theobald and Johnson. The Folios read *the fellow*, and awkwardly place those words at the beginning of the next line.

54 *sin's extremest gust*] The outbreak or outrage of sin in its fullest development. "Gust" is probably used as in "a gust of wind." The word is also found in the sense of "gusto" or "relish" or "gratification," and if it be employed in that sense here, the line would mean that murder is sin's highest gratification.

55 *by mercy*] by your leave or pardon, as in the common expression "cry you mercy," *i. e.*, I beg your pardon (*Lear*, III, vi, 51). This is a simpler explanation than "by a merciful interpretation of law."

62 *I say . . . done*] The subject pronoun "he" is elided. The First Folio reads *Why say my Lords ha's*. Pope substantially devised the present reading.

SEC. SEN. He has made too much plenty with 'em;  
 He's a sworn rioter: he has a sin  
 That often drowns him and takes his valour prisoner:  
 If there were no foes, that were enough  
 To overcome him: in that beastly fury 70  
 He has been known to commit outrages  
 And cherish factions: 't is inferr'd to us,  
 His days are foul and his drink dangerous.

FIRST SEN. He dies.

ALCIB. Hard fate! he might have died in war.  
 My lords, if not for any parts in him —  
 Though his right arm might purchase his own time  
 And be in debt to none — yet, more to move you,  
 Take my deserts to his and join 'em both:  
 And, for I know your reverend ages love  
 Security, I'll pawn my victories, all 80  
 My honours to you, upon his good returns.  
 If by this crime he owes the law his life,  
 Why, let the war receive't in valiant gore;  
 For law is strict, and war is nothing more.

FIRST SEN. We are for law: he dies; urge it no more,  
 On height of our displeasure: friend or brother,  
 He forfeits his own blood that spills another.

ALCIB. Must it be so? it must not be. My lords,  
 I do beseech you, know me.

67 *He's a sworn rioter*] He's under oath to practice rioting.

72 *'t is inferr'd*] it is alleged or reported.

73 *his drink*] his fits of drunkenness.

75 *any parts*] any great qualities.

87 *spills another*] kills another.



Their coin upon large interest, I myself  
 Rich only in large hurts. All those for this?  
 Is this the balsam that the usuring senate  
 Pours into captains' wounds? Banishment! 110  
 It comes not ill; I hate not to be banish'd;  
 It is a cause worthy my spleen and fury,  
 That I may strike at Athens. I'll cheer up  
 My discontented troops, and lay for hearts.  
 'Tis honour with most lands to be at odds;  
 Soldiers should brook as little wrongs as gods. [Exit.

SCENE VI — A BANQUETING-ROOM IN TIMON'S HOUSE

*Music. Tables set out: Servants attending. Enter divers Lords, Senators and others, at several doors*

FIRST LORD. The good time of day to you, sir.

SEC. LORD. I also wish it to you. I think this honourable lord did but try us this other day.

FIRST LORD. Upon that were my thoughts tiring when we encountered: I hope it is not so low with him as he made it seem in the trial of his several friends.

115 *lay for hearts*] seek to win the affections of my soldiers.

116 *'Tis honour . . . odds*] Governments are commonly so ill-administered that there are few which it is not an honour to oppose.

4 *tiring*] tearing, devouring; the word is used of hawks attacking their prey. Cf. *Venus and Adonis*, 55-56: "an empty eagle . . . *Tires with her beak* on feathers, flesh and bone."

SCENE VI      TIMON OF ATHENS

---

SEC. LORD. It should not be, by the persuasion of his new feasting.

FIRST LORD. I should think so: he hath sent me an earnest inviting, which many my near occasions did urge 10 me to put off; but he hath conjured me beyond them, and I must needs appear.

SEC. LORD. In like manner was I in debt to my importunate business, but he would not hear my excuse. I am sorry, when he sent to borrow of me, that my provision was out.

FIRST LORD. I am sick of that grief too, as I understand how all things go.

SEC. LORD. Every man here 's so. What would he have borrowed of you? 20

FIRST LORD. A thousand pieces.

SEC. LORD. A thousand pieces!

FIRST LORD. What of you?

SEC. LORD. He sent to me, sir, — Here he comes.

*Enter TIMON and Attendants*

TIM. With all my heart, gentlemen both: and how fare you?

FIRST LORD. Ever at the best, hearing well of your lordship.

SEC. LORD. The swallow follows not summer more willing than we your lordship. 30

---

7-8 *by the persuasion . . . [feasting]* if one might be persuaded by his new series of feasts.

11 *conjured me beyond them]* urged me so much as to give them up.

15-16 *my provision was out]* I was unprovided with funds.

TIM. [*Aside*] Nor more willingly leaves winter; such summer-birds are men.—Gentlemen, our dinner will not recompense this long stay: feast your ears with the music awhile, if they will fare so harshly o' the trumpet's sound; we shall to't presently.

FIRST LORD. I hope it remains not unkindly with your lordship, that I returned you an empty messenger.

TIM. O, sir, let it not trouble you.

SEC. LORD. My noble lord, —

TIM. Ah, my good friend, what cheer? 40

SEC. LORD. My most honourable lord, I am e'en sick of shame, that, when your lordship this other day sent to me, I was so unfortunate a beggar.

TIM. Think not on't, sir.

SEC. LORD. If you had sent but two hours before —

TIM. Let it not cumber your better remembrance.

[*The banquet brought in.*] Come, bring in all together.

SEC. LORD. All covered dishes!

FIRST LORD. Royal cheer, I warrant you.

THIRD LORD. Doubt not that, if money and the 50 season can yield it.

FIRST LORD. How do you? What's the news?

THIRD LORD. Alcibades is banished: hear you of it?

FIRST AND SEC. LORDS. Alcibiades banished!

THIRD LORD. 'Tis so, be sure of it.

FIRST LORD. How? how?

34-35 *if they will fare . . . sound*] if they will accept such harsh fare as the trumpet's sound.

46 *Let it not cumber . . . remembrance*] Do not trouble yourself by thinking of such matters, think of pleasanter things.

49 *Royal cheer*] See note on *Merch. of Ven.*, III, ii, 241: "royal merchant."



SCENE VI      TIMON OF ATHENS

---

SEC. LORD. I pray you, upon what?

TIM. My worthy friends, will you draw near?

THIRD LORD. I'll tell you more anon. Here's a noble feast toward. 60

SEC. LORD. This is the old man still.

THIRD LORD. Will 't hold? will 't hold?

SEC. LORD. It does: but time will — and so —

THIRD LORD. I do conceive.

TIM. Each man to his stool, with that spur as he would to the lip of his mistress: your diet shall be in all places alike. Make not a city feast of it, to let the meat cool ere we can agree upon the first place: sit, sit. The gods require our thanks.

You great benefactors, sprinkle our society with <sup>70</sup> thankfulness. For your own gifts, make yourselves praised: but reserve still to give, lest your deities be despised. Lend to each man enough, that one need not lend to another; for, were your godheads to borrow of men, men would forsake the gods. Make the meat be beloved more than the man that gives it. Let no assembly of twenty be without a score of villains: if there sit twelve women at the table, let a dozen of them be — as they are. The rest of your fees, O gods, — the senators of Athens, together with the common lag of <sup>80</sup>

---

60 *toward*] at hand.

79 *be — as they are*] a contemptuous expression implying that they are disreputable.

*fees*] forfeits; those who are forfeit to the divine vengeance. Thus the Folios. Hanmer suggested *foes*.

80 *lag*] dregs or leavings. Cf. *1 Hen. IV*, V, i, 24: "the *lag end* of my

people, — what is amiss in them, you gods, make suitable for destruction. For these my present friends, as they are to me nothing, so in nothing bless them, and to nothing are they welcome.

Uncover, dogs, and lap.

[*The dishes are uncovered and seen to be full of warm water.*]

SOME SPEAK. What does his lordship mean?

SOME OTHER. I know not.

TIM. May you a better feast never behold,  
You knot of mouth-friends! smoke and luke-warm  
water

Is your perfection. This is Timon's last; 90  
Who stuck and spangled you with flatteries,  
Washes it off, and sprinkles in your faces  
Your reeking villany. [*Throwing the water in their faces.*]

Live loathed, and long,  
Most smiling, smooth, detested parasites,  
Courteous destroyers, affable wolves, meek bears,  
You fools of fortune, trencher-friends, time's flies,  
Cap-and-knee slaves, vapours, and minute-jacks!

life." "The common lag of people" is equivalent to "the scum of the people."

81-82 *what is amiss . . . destruction*] supply what is missing in them to fit them for destruction.

90 *Is your perfection*] Is like you at your best.

91 *spangled you with flatteries*] Thus the Folios. Warburton suggested *spangled with your flatteries*.

96 *time's flies*] creatures of the hour. Cf. II, ii, 173, *supra*.

97 *minute-jacks*] time-servers. Figures that struck the bells or chimes in old clocks were called "*jacks of the clock*." Cf. *Rich. II*, V, v, 60: "his *Jack o' the clock*."

SCENE VI      TIMON OF ATHENS

---

Of man and beast the infinite malady  
Crust you quite o'er! What, dost thou go?  
Soft! take thy physic first — thou too — and thou: —  
Stay, I will lend thee money, borrow none. 101

[*Throws the dishes at them, and drives them out.*]

What, all in motion? Henceforth be no feast,  
Whereat a villain's not a welcome guest.  
Burn, house! sink, Athens! henceforth hated be  
Of Timon man and all humanity! [Exit.]

*Re-enter the Lords, Senators, etc.*

FIRST LORD. How now, my lords!

SEC. LORD. Know you the quality of Lord Timon's  
fury?

THIRD LORD. Push! did you see my cap?

FOURTH LORD. I have lost my gown. 109

FIRST LORD. He's but a mad lord, and nought but  
humour sways him. He gave me a jewel th' other day,  
and now he has beat it out of my hat. Did you see  
my jewel?

THIRD LORD. Did you see my cap?

SEC. LORD. Here 'tis.

FOURTH LORD. Here lies my gown.

FIRST LORD. Let's make no stay.

SEC. LORD. Lord Timon's mad.

THIRD LORD. I feel't upon my bones.

FOURTH LORD. One day he gives us diamonds, next  
day stones. [Exeunt.]

---

98 *the infinite malady*] maladies of infinite variety.

108 *Push!*] Pish! a term of impatience.

111 *humour*] whim, caprice.

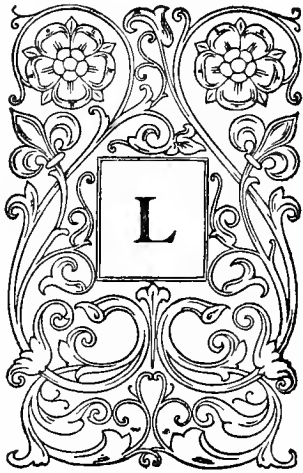


ACT FOURTH — SCENE I

WITHOUT THE WALLS OF ATHENS

Enter TIMON

TIMON



LET ME LOOK BACK UPON  
thee. O thou wall,  
That girdlest in those wolves,  
dive in the earth,  
And fence not Athens! Matrons,  
turn incontinent!  
Obedience fail in children!  
Slaves and fools,  
Pluck the grave wrinkled senate  
from the bench,  
And minister in their steads!  
To general filths  
Convert o' the instant, green  
virginity!

Do 't in your parents' eyes! Bankrupts, hold fast;  
Rather than render back, out with your knives,

6 *general filths*] common prostitutes.

7 *Convert*] Turn; used intransitively.

SCENE I      TIMON OF ATHENS

---

And cut your trusters' throats! Bound servants, steal! 10  
 Large-handed robbers your grave masters are  
 And pill by law. Maid, to thy master's bed!  
 Thy mistress is o' the brothel. Son of sixteen,  
 Pluck the lined crutch from thy old limping sire,  
 With it beat out his brains! Piety and fear,  
 Religion to the gods, peace, justice, truth,  
 Domestic awe, night-rest and neighbourhood,  
 Instruction, manners, mysteries and trades,  
 Degrees, observances, customs and laws,  
 Decline to your confounding contraries, 20  
 And let confusion live! Plagues incident to men,  
 Your potent and infectious fevers heap  
 On Athens, ripe for stroke! Thou cold sciatica,  
 Cripple our senators, that their limbs may halt  
 As lamely as their manners! Lust and liberty  
 Creep in the minds and marrows of our youth,  
 That 'gainst the stream of virtue they may strive,  
 And drown themselves in riot! Itches, blains,  
 Sow all the Athenian bosoms, and their crop 30  
 Be general leprosy! Breath infect breath,  
 That their society, as their friendship, may  
 Be merely poison! Nothing I'll bear from thee

---

12 *pill*] pillage, rob.

13 *Son*] The Second Folio's correction of the First Folio's *Some*.

14 *lined*] padded, stuffed.

20 *confounding contraries*] opposites that lead to destruction.

21 *let*] Hanmer's correction of the Folio reading *yet*, which has been defended, the phrase being interpreted to mean "yet let not dissolution come, but the miseries of confusion continue."

25 *liberty*] licentiousness.

But nakedness, thou detestable town!  
 Take thou that too, with multiplying bans!  
 Timon will to the woods, where he shall find  
 The unkindest beast more kinder than mankind.  
 The gods confound — hear me, you good gods all! —  
 The Athenians both within and out that wall!  
 And grant, as Timon grows, his hate may grow  
 To the whole race of mankind, high and low! 40  
 Amen. [Exit.]

## SCENE II — ATHENS

## TIMON'S HOUSE

*Enter FLAVIUS, with two or three Servants*

FIRST SERV. Hear you, master steward, where's our  
 master?

Are we undone? cast off? nothing remaining?

FLAV. Alack, my fellows, what should I say to you?  
 Let me be recorded by the righteous gods,  
 I am as poor as you.

FIRST SERV. Such a house broke!  
 So noble a master fall'n! All gone! and not  
 One friend to take his fortune by the arm,  
 And go along with him!

SEC. SERV. As we do turn our backs  
 From our companion thrown into his grave,  
 So his familiars to his buried fortunes 10

34 *multiplying bans*] accumulating or accumulated curses.

10 *his familiars . . . fortunes*] those to whom his now buried fortunes  
 are familiar.

SCENE II      TIMON OF ATHENS

---

Slink all away; leave their false vows with him,  
Like empty purses pick'd; and his poor self,  
A dedicated beggar to the air,  
With his disease of all-shunn'd poverty,  
Walks, like contempt, alone. More of our fellows.

*Enter other Servants*

FLAV. All broken implements of a ruin'd house.

THIRD SERV. Yet do our hearts wear Timon's livery;  
That see I by our faces; we are fellows still,  
Serving alike in sorrow: leak'd is our bark,  
And we, poor mates, stand on the dying deck,      20  
Hearing the surges threat: we must all part  
Into this sea of air.

FLAV.                      Good fellows all,  
The latest of my wealth I'll share amongst you.  
Wherever we shall meet, for Timon's sake  
Let's yet be fellows; let's shake our heads, and say,  
As 't were a knell unto our master's fortunes,  
"We have seen better days." Let each take some.  
Nay, put out all your hands. Not one word more:  
Thus part we rich in sorrow, parting poor.

*[Servants embrace, and part several ways.]*

O, the fierce wretchedness that glory brings us!      30  
Who would not wish to be from wealth exempt,  
Since riches point to misery and contempt?  
Who would be so mock'd with glory? or to live  
But in a dream of friendship?

---

15 *like contempt*] like an object of contempt. Cf. *Tw. Night*, II, v, 183:

"it cannot but turn him into a notable *contempt*."

20 *dying*] fatal, doomed.

To have his pomp and all what state compounds  
 But only painted, like his varnish'd friends?  
 Poor honest lord, brought low by his own heart,  
 Undone by goodness! Strange, unusual blood,  
 When man's worst sin is, he does too much good!  
 Who then dares to be half so kind again? 40  
 For bounty, that makes gods, does still mar men.  
 My dearest lord, blest to be most accursed,  
 Rich only to be wretched, thy great fortunes  
 Are made thy chief afflictions. Alas, kind lord!  
 He's flung in rage from this ingrateful seat  
 Of monstrous friends; nor has he with him to  
 Supply his life, or that which can command it.  
 I'll follow, and inquire him out:  
 I'll ever serve his mind with my best will;  
 Whilst I have gold, I'll be his steward still. [Exit. 50

SCENE III — WOODS AND CAVE, NEAR THE  
SEA-SHORE

*Enter TIMON, from the cave*

TIM. O blessed breeding sun, draw from the earth  
 Rotten humidity; below thy sister's orb  
 Infect the air! Twinn'd brothers of one womb,

35 *all what state compounds*] all that which composes dignity.

38 *blood*] disposition, propensity.

2 *Rotten humidity*] Dampness which rots. Cf. *Cor.*, II, iii, 31: "rotten dews."

*thy sister's orb*] orb of the moon, which was commonly regarded as the sister of the sun.



SCENE III      TIMON OF ATHENS

---

Whose procreation, residence and birth  
 Scarce is dividant, touch them with several fortunes,  
 The greater scorns the lesser: not nature,  
 To whom all sores lay siege, can bear great fortune  
 But by contempt of nature.  
 Raise me this beggar and deny 't that lord,  
 The senator shall bear contempt hereditary,      10  
 The beggar native honour.  
 It is the pasture lards the rother's sides,  
 The want that makes him lean. Who dares, who dares,  
 In purity of manhood stand upright,  
 And say "This man's a flatterer"? if one be,  
 So are they all; for every guise of fortune  
 Is smooth'd by that below: the learned pate  
 Ducks to the golden fool: all is oblique;

5 *dividant*] divisible or divided.

6-8 *not nature . . . of nature*] human nature, the prey of all degrading diseases, cannot suffer excess of good fortune without evincing a disregard of natural ties.

9 *Raise me . . . lord*] "me" is the ethic dative. In "deny 't" the object "it" is "the excess of good fortune" implicitly derived from the previous sentence.

11 *native honour*] honour of the kind that is commonly hereditary.

12 *rother's*] Singer's emendation of the Folio reading *Brothers*. "Rother" though a somewhat archaic word is frequently found in Elizabethan literature in the sense of "horned beasts," especially oxen and cows. "Rother market" was and is the name of a chief thoroughfare — formerly the cattle-market — of Stratford-on-Avon. Golding's Ovid has the phrase "herds of *rother* beasts."

16-17 *every guise . . . below*] every degree of fortune is flattered or fawned upon by the one below it.

18 *all is oblique*] all is crooked: Pope's ingenious correction of the Folio reading *All's oblique*.

There's nothing level in our cursed natures  
 But direct villany. Therefore be abhorr'd 20  
 All feasts, societies and throngs of men!  
 His semblable, yea, himself, Timon disdains:  
 Destruction fang mankind! Earth, yield me roots!

[Digging.]

Who seeks for better of thee, sauce his palate  
 With thy most operant poison! What is here?  
 Gold? yellow, glittering, precious gold? No, gods,  
 I am no idle votarist: roots, you clear heavens!  
 Thus much of this will make black white, foul fair,  
 Wrong right, base noble, old young, coward valiant.  
 Ha, you gods! why this? what this, you gods? Why,  
 this 30

Will lug your priests and servants from your sides,  
 Pluck stout men's pillows from below their heads:

19 *level*] in the straight line, without ups and downs; the converse of  
 "oblique" (line 18).

22 *His semblable*] His like, his self. Cf. *Hamlet*, V, ii, 118: "His *sem-*  
*blable* is his mirror."

23 *fang*] seize or grip with the teeth.

27 *no idle votarist*] no insincere suppliant or worshipper. Timon means  
 here that he is praying the earth to give him roots, and that he means  
 what he says; gold will not serve his turn.

32 *Pluck stout men's pillows . . . heads*] An allusion to the method of has-  
 tening death which was said to be commonly practised by nurses.  
 Cf. Ben Jonson's *Volpone*, Act II, Sc. iii (ed. Gifford, p. 186): "in his  
 next fit we may let him go. 'T is but to *pull the pillow from his head*,  
 and he is throttled." *Stout men* — the old reading, for which *sick*  
*men* is often substituted — doubtless means men strong enough to  
 resist disease, if they are nursed with proper care.

SCENE III TIMON OF ATHENS

---

This yellow slave  
 Will knit and break religions; bless the accursed;  
 Make the hoar leprosy adored; place thieves,  
 And give them title, knee and approbation  
 With senators on the bench: this is it  
 That makes the wappen'd widow wed again;  
 She, whom the spital-house and ulcerous sores  
 Would cast the gorge at, this embalms and spices 40  
 To the April day again. Come, damned earth,  
 Thou common whore of mankind, that put'st odds  
 Among the rout of nations, I will make thee  
 Do thy right nature. [*March afar off.*] Ha! a drum?  
 Thou'rt quick,

---

- 35 *hoar leprosy*] leprosy which makes the skin white as snow. Cf. *2 Kings*, v, 27: "a leper as white as snow," and line 154, *infra*, where "hoar" means "strike with leprous disease."
- 38 *wappen'd*] incontinent, unchaste. The word is not found elsewhere, but is obviously formed from the verb "wap," which means "indulge in sexual intercourse." "Wapper'd" which is still in provincial use for "fatigued," "worn-out," is substituted by some editors. "Unwappered" with the meaning of "innocent," "untried," is found in *Two Noble Kinsmen*, V, iv, 10.
- 39 *the spital-house . . . sores*] the hospital with its sufferers from ulcerous sores.
- 40-41 *spices To the April day again*] invests with all the perfumed freshness of early spring once more. Cf. *Sonnet* iii, 10: "the lovely *April* of her prime."
- 42-44 *put'st odds . . . nature*] causeth enmity among the noisy multitude of nations. I will make thee, gold, perform the office that rightly appertains to thee, *i. e.*, of keeping thyself buried underground.
- 44 *quick*] alive.

But yet I'll bury thee: thou'lt go, strong thief,  
 When gouty keepers of thee cannot stand:  
 Nay, stay thou out for earnest. [Keeping some gold.]

*Enter* ALCIBIADES, *with drum and fife, in warlike manner;*  
 PHRYNIA *and* TIMANDRA

ALCIB. What art thou there? speak.

TIM. A beast, as thou art. The canker gnaw thy heart,  
 For showing me again the eyes of man!

ALCIB. What is thy name? Is man so hateful to thee, 50  
 That art thyself a man?

TIM. I am misanthropos, and hate mankind.  
 For thy part, I do wish thou wert a dog,  
 That I might love thee something.

ALCIB. I know thee well;  
 But in thy fortunes am unlearn'd and strange.

TIM. I know thee too; and more than that I know thee  
 I not desire to know. Follow thy drum;  
 With man's blood paint the ground, gules, gules:  
 Religious canons, civil laws are cruel;  
 Then what should war be? This fell whore of thine 60  
 Hath in her more destruction than thy sword,  
 For all her cherubin look.

45 *thou'lt go, strong thief*] thou wilt retain thy powers of movement, thou powerful villain.

47 *earnest*] earnest-money, hanel; the sum of money paid as preliminary to a bargain. Cf. line 167, *infra*.

52 *I am misanthropos*] Cf. the marginal note in North's translation of Plutarch's Life of Mark Antony, ch. 38: "Antonius followeth the life and example of *Timon Misanthropos* the Athenian."

58 *gules*] the heraldic term for "red."

SCENE III      TIMON OF ATHENS

---

PHRY.                                      Thy lips rot off!

TIM. I will not kiss thee; then the rot returns  
To thine own lips again.

ALCIB. How came the noble Timon to this change?

TIM. As the moon does, by wanting light to give:  
But then renew I could not, like the moon;  
There were no suns to borrow of.

ALCIB. Noble Timon, what friendship may I do thee?

TIM. None, but to maintain my opinion.                                      70

ALCIB. What is it, Timon?

TIM. Promise me friendship, but perform none: if  
thou wilt not promise, the gods plague thee, for thou  
art a man: if thou dost perform, confound thee, for  
thou art a man!

ALCIB. I have heard in some sort of thy miseries.

TIM. Thou saw'st them when I had prosperity.

ALCIB. I see them now; then was a blessed time.

TIM. As thine is now, held with a brace of harlots.

TIMAN. Is this the Athenian minion whom the world so  
Voiced so regardfully?

TIM.                                      Art thou Timandra?

TIMAN. Yes.

TIM. Be a whore still: they love thee not that use thee;

---

63-64 *I will not . . . lips again*] I will not take away the venereal disease from thy lips by kissing thee; rather let the disease continue to infect thee. It was supposed that the communication to another of the venereal infection left the infector free.

72-75 *Promise . . . a man*] Timon means that seeing that Alcibiades is that detestable creature, man, he wishes him ill, whatever he does, — whether he does or does not promise friendship, whether he performs or does not perform acts of friendship.

Give them diseases, leaving with thee their lust.  
 Make use of thy salt hours: season the slaves  
 For tubs and baths; bring down rose-cheeked youth  
 To the tub-fast and the diet.

TIMAN. Hang thee, monster!

ALCIB. Pardon him, sweet Timandra, for his wits  
 Are drown'd and lost in his calamities.

I have but little gold of late, brave Timon, 90  
 The want whereof doth daily make revolt  
 In my penurious band: I have heard, and grieved,  
 How cursed Athens, mindless of thy worth,  
 Forgetting thy great deeds, when neighbour states,  
 But for thy sword and fortune, trod upon them —

TIM. I prithee, beat thy drum, and get thee gone.

ALCIB. I am thy friend and pity thee, dear Timon.

TIM. How dost thou pity him whom thou dost trouble?  
 I had rather be alone.

ALCIB. Why, fare thee well:  
 Here is some gold for thee.

TIM. Keep it, I cannot eat it. 100

ALCIB. When I have laid proud Athens on a heap —

TIM. Warr'st thou 'gainst Athens?

ALCIB. Ay, Timon, and have cause.

TIM. The gods confound them all in thy conquest,  
 And thee after, when thou hast conquer'd!

85 *salt*] *lustful*.

87 *the tub-fast and the diet*] Theobald's correction of the Folio reading  
*Fubfast*. The reference is to the curative bath regimen which was  
 commonly prescribed for the venereal disease. "Tub-fast" means  
 the abstinence from food which accompanied the bath treatment.

SCENE III TIMON OF ATHENS

---

ALCIB. Why me, Timon?

TIM. That by killing of villains  
 Thou wast born to conquer my country.  
 Put up thy gold: go on, — here's gold, — go on;  
 Be as a planetary plague, when Jove  
 Will o'er some high-iced city hang his poison  
 In the sick air: let not thy sword skip one: 110  
 Pity not honour'd age for his white beard;  
 He is an usurer: strike me the counterfeit matron;  
 It is her habit only that is honest,  
 Herself's a bawd: let not the virgin's cheek  
 Make soft thy trenchant sword; for those milk-paps,  
 That through the window-bars bore at men's eyes,  
 Are not within the leaf of pity writ,  
 But set them down horrible traitors: spare not the babe  
 Whose dimpled smiles from fools exhaust their mercy;  
 Think it a bastard whom the oracle 120  
 Hath doubtfully pronounced thy throat shall cut,  
 And mince it sans remorse: swear against objects;

108 *a planetary plague*] a pestilence caused by planetary influence. Cf. *Rich. II*, I, iii, 284: "Devouring pestilence hangs in our air."

116 *window-bars*] Thus Johnson. The Folios read *window Barne*, which seems unintelligible. The reference apparently is to the bands of crossbar, or lattice-work embroidery, which sometimes covered women's bosoms across a lowcut bodice.

119 *exhaust*] draw forth.

121 *doubtfully*] ambiguously. There may be a reference to the story of Œdipus whose father Laius was warned by the oracle that he would perish by the hands of his son, and the prophecy was fulfilled.

122 *objects*] objects exciting sympathy. Cf. *Troil. and Cress.*, IV, v, 106: "tender objects." For "swear against objects," cf. *Sonnet clii*, 12: "Or made them [*i. e.*, eyes] swear against the thing they see."

Put armour on thine ears and on thine eyes,  
 Whose proof nor yells of mothers, maids, nor babes,  
 Nor sight of priests in holy vestments bleeding,  
 Shall pierce a jot. There's gold to pay thy soldiers:  
 Make large confusion; and, thy fury spent,  
 Confounded be thyself! Speak not, be gone.

ALCIB. Hast thou gold yet? I'll take the gold thou  
 givest me,

Not all thy counsel. 130

TIM. Dost thou or dost thou not, heaven's curse upon  
 thee!

PHR. AND TIMAN. Give us some gold, good Timon:  
 hast thou more?

TIM. Enough to make a whore forswear her trade,  
 And to make whores, a bawd. Hold up, you sluts,  
 Your aprons mountant: you are not oathable;  
 Although, I know, you'll swear, terribly swear,  
 Into strong shudders and to heavenly agues,  
 The immortal gods that hear you; spare your oaths,  
 I'll trust to your conditions: be whores still;  
 And he whose pious breath seeks to convert you, 140  
 Be strong in whore, allure him, burn him up;

---

134 *to make whores, a bawd*] to induce a bawd to forswear her trade of making whores. The words are inverted.

135 *mountant*] a heraldic term for "lifted up."  
*oathable*] capable of truthfully taking an oath.

139 *I'll trust to your conditions*] I'll trust to your dispositions. Timon means that he is aware that the women would be quite willing to swear that they would abandon their immoral courses; but that he'll trust to their natural inclinations to keep them what they are.



SCENE III TIMON OF ATHENS

---

Let your close fire predominate his smoke,  
 And be no turncoats: yet may your pains, six months,  
 Be quite contrary: and thatch your poor thin roofs  
 With burdens of the dead; — some that were hang'd,  
 No matter: — wear them, betray with them: whore still;  
 Paint till a horse may mire upon your face:  
 A pox of wrinkles!

PHR. AND TIMAN. Well, more gold: what then?  
 Believe 't that we'll do any thing for gold.

TIM. Consumptions sow 150  
 In hollow bones of man; strike their sharp shins,  
 And mar men's spurring. Crack the lawyer's voice,  
 That he may never more false title plead,  
 Nor sound his quilllets shrilly: hoar the flamen,  
 That scolds against the quality of flesh  
 And not believes himself: down with the nose,

---

142 *Let your close fire . . . smoke*] Let your secret fire of lust prevail over his cloudy talk.

143-145 *yet may your pains . . . of the dead*] yet your labours or pains should for six months have quite a different character. They should be applied to repair of the disorders of debauchery. Among other things you must cover your heads which your vicious indulgences have made bald with false locks obtained from the dead. Cf. *Sonnet* lxxviii, 5-7, "the golden tresses of the dead, The right of sepulchres, were shorn away, To live a second life on second head."

147 *mire*] stick in the mire.

154 *quilllets*] quidlibets, nice legal points.

*hoar the flamen*] make the priest rotten with disease. "Hoar" as a verb is rare. But the adjective in the sense of "rotten" is not uncommon. Cf. *Rom. and Jul.*, II, iv, 130: "an old hare *hoar* [*i. e.*, white with mouldiness]." At line 35, *supra*, the adjective "hoar" is applied to "leprosy."

Down with it flat; take the bridge quite away  
Of him that, his particular to foresee,  
Smells from the general weal: make curl'd-pate ruffians  
bald;

And let the unscarr'd braggarts of the war 160  
Derive some pain from you: plague all;  
That your activity may defeat and quell  
The source of all erection. There's more gold:  
Do you damn others, and let this damn you,  
And ditches grave you all!

PHR. AND TIMON. More counsel with more money,  
bounteous Timon.

TIM. More whore, more mischief first; I have given  
you earnest.

ALCIB. Strike up the drum towards Athens! Fare-  
well, Timon:

If I thrive well, I'll visit thee again.

TIM. If I hope well, I'll never see thee more. 170

ALCIB. I never did thee harm.

TIM. Yes, thou spokest well of me.

ALCIB. Call'st thou that harm?

TIM. Men daily find it. Get thee away, and take  
Thy beagles with thee.

ALCIB. We but offend him. Strike!

[*Drum beats. Exeunt Alcibiades, Phrynia, and Timandra.*

158-159 *him that . . . general weal*] the man who, in order to hunt after  
his private interests, abandons the scent of a public good. The  
metaphor is from dogs hunting.

165 *grave*] entomb.

167 *earnest*] earnest-money. Cf. line 47, *supra*.

174 *beagles*] a small breed of dogs following their masters very closely.

SCENE III TIMON OF ATHENS

TIM. That nature, being sick of man's unkindness,  
Should yet be hungry! Common mother, thou,

[Digging.]

Whose womb unmeasurable and infinite breast  
Teems, and feeds all; whose self-same mettle,  
Whereof thy proud child, arrogant man, is puff'd,  
Engenders the black toad and adder blue, 180  
The gilded newt and eyeless venom'd worm,  
With all the abhorred births below crisp heaven  
Whereon Hyperion's quickening fire doth shine;  
Yield him, who all thy human sons doth hate,  
From forth thy plenteous bosom one poor root!  
Ensear thy fertile and conceptionous womb,  
Let it no more bring out ingrateful man!  
Go great with tigers, dragons, wolves and bears;  
Teem with new monsters, whom thy upward face  
Hath to the marbled mansion all above 190  
Never presented! — O, a root! dear thanks! —  
Dry up thy marrows, vines, and plough-torn leas;

181 *eyeless venom'd worm*] The blindworm, which, contrary to popular belief, is not venomous.

182 *crisp*] apparently "shining" as in "the *crisped* morn" in Robert An-ton's *The Philosopher's Satire*, 1616. Cotgrave *Fr. Engl. Dict.* explains "crespu" as "crisped, sleeked, shining." "Crisp" is more commonly applied to the clouds in the sense of "curled" or "wavy."

183 *Hyperion*] the sun-god.

186 *conceptionous*] conceiving.

187 *bring out*] bear, give birth to.

190 *marbled mansion all above*] Cf. *Othello*, III, iii, 464: "by yond *marble heaven*." "Marble" or "marbled" was a conventional epithet for the firmament. It was regarded as solid and everlasting.

192 *marrows*] fat lands, which produce the "morsels unctuous" of line 194.

Whereof ingrateful man, with liquorish draughts  
And morsels unctuous, greases his pure mind,  
That from it all consideration slips!

*Enter APEMANTUS*

More man? plague, plague!

APEM. I was directed hither: men report  
Thou dost affect my manners, and dost use them.

TIM. 'Tis then because thou dost not keep a dog,  
Whom I would imitate: consumption catch thee! 200

APEM. This is in thee a nature but infected;  
A poor unmanly melancholy sprung  
From change of fortune. Why this spade? this place?  
This slave-like habit? and these looks of care?  
Thy flatterers yet wear silk, drink wine, lie soft,  
Hug their diseased perfumes and have forgot  
That ever Timon was. Shame not these woods  
By putting on the cunning of a carper.  
Be thou a flatterer now, and seek to thrive  
By that which has undone thee: hinge thy knee, 210  
And let his very breath whom thou'lt observe  
Blow off thy cap; praise his most vicious strain,  
And call it excellent: thou wast told thus;

201 *This is in thee . . . infected*] This is your nature merely infected  
by disease; this is not your normal state.

203 *fortune*] Rowe's correction of the *future* of the Folios.

206 *their diseased perfumes*] their perfumed mistresses infected with  
disease. Cf. *Othello*, IV, i, 144: "'T is such another fitchew! marry,  
a perfumed one."

208 *the cunning of a carper*] the counterfeit of a faultfinder.

213 *told*] flattered.

SCENE III      TIMON OF ATHENS

Thou gavest thine ears like tapsters that bade welcome  
 To knaves and all approachers: 'tis most just  
 That thou turn rascal; hadst thou wealth again,  
 Rascals should have 't. Do not assume my likeness.

TIM. Were I like thee, I'd throw away myself.

APEM. Thou hast cast away thyself, being like thyself,  
 A madman so long, now a fool. What, think'st 220  
 That the bleak air, thy boisterous chamberlain,  
 Will put thy shirt on warm? will these moss'd trees,  
 That have outlived the eagle, page thy heels,  
 And skip when thou point'st out? will the cold brook,  
 Candied with ice, caudle thy morning taste,  
 To cure thy o'er-night's surfeit? Call the creatures  
 Whose naked natures live in all the spite  
 Of wreakful heaven, whose bare unhoused trunks,  
 To the conflicting elements exposed,  
 Answer mere nature; bid them flatter thee; 230  
 O, thou shalt find —

TIM.                            A fool of thee: depart.

APEM. I love thee better now than e'er I did.

TIM. I hate thee worse.

APEM.                            Why?

TIM.                            Thou flatter'st misery.

---

214 *like tapsters that bade welcome*] like shrill-tongued tapsters answering every call.

222 *moss'd trees*] Hanmer's correction of the Folio reading *moist trees* which may be right. But cf. *As you like it*, IV, iii, 103: "Under an oak whose boughs were *moss'd with age*."

225 *caudle*] refresh like a warming drink.

228 *wreakful*] vengeful, full of vengeance.

230 *Answer mere nature*] Satisfy the bare needs of nature.

APEM. I flatter not, but say thou art a caitiff.

TIM. Why dost thou seek me out?

APEM. To vex thee.

TIM. Always a villain's office or a fool's.

Dost please thyself in't?

APEM. Ay.

TIM. What! a knave too?

APEM. If thou didst put this sour-cold habit on

To castigate thy pride, 't were well: but thou

Dost it enforcedly; thou'ldst courtier be again, 240

Wert thou not beggar. Willing misery

Outlives incertain pomp, is crown'd before:

The one is filling still, never complete,

The other at high wish: best state, contentless,

Hath a distracted and most wretched being,

Worse than the worst, content.

Thou shouldst desire to die, being miserable.

TIM. Not by his breath that is more miserable.

Thou art a slave, whom Fortune's tender arm

With favour never clasp'd, but bred a dog. 250

237 *a knave too?*] Timon implies that he already knew Apemantus for a fool, but the admission that he is vexing him designedly proves him a knave in addition.

241-246 *Willing misery . . . worst, content*] Misery or beggary that is voluntarily assumed lives longer than (or surpasses) unstable pomp, and realises its aim first. The desire of pomp, though always receiving sustenance, is never satisfied; pursuit of misery or beggary readily obtains the height of its wish; the best condition of life, which inevitably lacks contentment, has a distracted and most wretched existence, a condition far worse than the worst and poorest condition when linked with a sense of contentment.

248 *by his breath that*] by the word of him who.

SCENE III TIMON OF ATHENS

---

Hadst thou, like us from our first swath, proceeded  
 The sweet degrees that this brief world affords  
 To such as may the passive drugs of it  
 Freely command, thou wouldst have plunged thyself  
 In general riot, melted down thy youth  
 In different beds of lust, and never learn'd  
 The icy precepts of respect, but follow'd  
 The sugar'd game before thee. But myself,  
 Who had the world as my confectionary,  
 The mouths, the tongues, the eyes and hearts of men 260  
 At duty, more than I could frame employment;  
 That numberless upon me stuck, as leaves

251 *from our first swath*] from our earliest days, since we wore the swathing clothes of infancy.

251-252 *proceeded The sweet degrees*] gone through or experienced the pleasant grades (of life). The figurative language — “proceeded” and “degrees” — seems to be taken from academic graduation. At line 267, *infra*, “commence” continues the academic terminology. Cf. 2 *Hen. IV*, IV, iii, 114: “till sack *commences* it” and note.

253 *drugs*] Thus substantially all the Folios. Delius substituted *drudges* which seems to have been spelt *drugges* in early times. It is difficult to give “drugs” its ordinary meaning of “medicines” or “medicaments.” It may mean here “commodities” in a very general sense. “Passive” means “obedient” or “submissive.”

257 *icy precepts of respect*] cold precepts of prudence.

258-265 *But myself . . . that blows*] The meaning of this passage is clear, though the grammatical construction is elliptical. “But myself,” the subject of the sentence, has no verb; these opening words are absorbed in a dependent chain of relative clauses, which fail to complete the sentence. “That” (*i. e.*, who) in line 262 is the relative, with “men” of line 260 for antecedent; it governs the verbs “have . . . fell” (*i. e.*, fallen) and “left” (line 264).

259 *confectionary*] store of sweetmeats.

Do on the oak, have with one winter's brush  
 Fell from their boughs, and left me open, bare  
 For every storm that blows: I, to bear this,  
 That never knew but better, is some burden:  
 Thy nature did commence in sufferance, time  
 Hath made thee hard in 't. Why shouldst thou hate men?  
 They never flatter'd thee: what hast thou given?  
 If thou wilt curse, thy father, that poor rag, 270  
 Must be thy subject, who in spite put stuff  
 To some she beggar and compounded thee,  
 Poor rogue hereditary. Hence, be gone!  
 If thou hadst not been born the worst of men,  
 Thou hadst been a knave and flatterer.

APEM. Art thou proud yet?

TIM. Ay, that I am not thee.

APEM. I, that I was

No prodigal.

TIM. I, that I am one now:

Were all the wealth I have shut up in thee,  
 I'd give thee leave to hang it. Get thee gone.  
 That the whole life of Athens were in this! 280  
 Thus would I eat it. [Eating a root.]

APEM. Here; I will mend thy feast.

[Offering him a root.]

TIM. First mend my company; take away thyself.

APEM. So I shall mend mine own, by the lack of thine.

265 *I, to bear this*] My endurance of this. The construction is still irregular.

270 *that poor rag*] a contemptuous term of abuse.

282 *my company*] Rowe's change for the Folio reading *thy company*.



SCENE III TIMON OF ATHENS

---

TIM. 'Tis not well mended so, it is but botch'd;  
If not, I would it were.

APEM. What wouldst thou have to Athens?

TIM. Thee thither in a whirlwind. If thou wilt,  
Tell them there I have gold; look, so I have.

APEM. Here is no use for gold.

TIM. The best and truest;  
For here it sleeps, and does no hired harm. 290

APEM. Where liest o' nights, Timon?

TIM. Under that's above me. Where feed'st thou o'  
days, Apemantus?

APEM. Where my stomach finds meat; or, rather,  
where I eat it.

TIM. Would poison were obedient and knew my mind!

APEM. Where wouldst thou send it?

TIM. To sauce thy dishes. 298

APEM. The middle of humanity thou never knewest,  
but the extremity of both ends: when thou wast in thy  
gilt and thy perfume, they mocked thee for too much  
curiosity; in thy rags thou know'st none, but art de-  
spised for the contrary. There's a medlar for thee; eat it.

TIM. On what I hate I feed not.

APEM. Dost hate a medlar?

TIM. Ay, though it look like thee.

---

284 *botch'd*] roughly patched.

292 *Under that's above me*] Cf. *Cor.*, IV, v, 38: "Under the canopy [sc. of heaven]."

300-301 *thy gilt*] thy gilded splendour.

302 *curiosity*] finical delicacy, fastidiousness.

306 *Ay, though it look like thee*] Timon is ironical. He would hate a medlar though it looked as pleasant as Apemantus.

APEM. An thou hadst hated meddlers sooner, thou shouldst have loved thyself better now. What man didst thou ever know unthrift that was beloved after his means?

TIM. Who, without those means thou talk'st of, didst thou ever know beloved? 311

APEM. Myself.

TIM. I understand thee; thou hadst some means to keep a dog.

APEM. What things in the world canst thou nearest compare to thy flatterers?

TIM. Women nearest; but men, men are the things themselves. What wouldst thou do with the world, Apemantus, if it lay in thy power?

APEM. Give it the beasts, to be rid of the men. 320

TIM. Wouldst thou have thyself fall in the confusion of men, and remain a beast with the beasts?

APEM. Ay, Timon.

TIM. A beastly ambition, which the gods grant thee t' attain to! If thou wert the lion, the fox would beguile thee: if thou wert the lamb, the fox would eat thee: if thou wert the fox, the lion would suspect thee, when peradventure thou wert accused by the ass: if thou wert the ass, thy dulness would torment thee, and still thou livedst but as a breakfast to the wolf: if thou wert the wolf, thy greediness would afflict thee, and oft thou

---

308-309 *What man . . . his means*] What spendthrift didst thou ever know who was beloved after his means were exhausted?

321 *confusion*] ruin, destruction.

SCENE III      TIMON OF ATHENS

---

shouldst hazard thy life for thy dinner: wert thou the unicorn, pride and wrath would confound thee, and make thine own self the conquest of thy fury: wert thou a bear, thou wouldst be killed by the horse: wert thou a horse, thou wouldst be seized by the leopard: wert thou a leopard, thou wert german to the lion, and the spots of thy kindred were jurors on thy life: all thy safety were remotion, and thy defence absence. What beast couldst thou be that were not subject to a beast? and what a beast art thou already, that seest not thy loss in transformation! 342

APEM. If thou couldst please me with speaking to me, thou mightst have hit upon it here: the commonwealth of Athens is become a forest of beasts.

TIM. How has the ass broke the wall, that thou art out of the city?

APEM. Yonder comes a poet and a painter: the plague of company light upon thee! I will fear to catch it, and give way: when I know not what else to do, I'll see thee again. 351

---

332-333 *the unicorn*] a fabulous animal of great ferocity. Its death usually came through the impalement of its single horn on a tree, when charging its natural foe, the lion. Cf. *Jul. Cæs.*, II, i, 204: "*unicorns* may be betray'd with trees."

337 *german to the lion*] brother to the lion, who, suffering no rivalry, was in the habit of slaying all claiming fraternal relationship.

339 *remotion*] seclusion.

348 *Yonder . . . painter*] Thus the First Folio. But the poet and the painter do not appear till the beginning of the next act, — at an interval of some 300 lines. The words are possibly an accidental survival of the first draft of the play by another hand, which Shakespeare revised.

TIM. When there is nothing living but thee, thou shalt be welcome. I had rather be a beggar's dog than Apemantus.

APEM. Thou art the cap of all the fools alive.

TIM. Would thou wert clean enough to spit upon!

APEM. A plague on thee! thou art too bad to curse.

TIM. All villains that do stand by thee are pure.

APEM. There is no leprosy but what thou speak'st.

TIM. If I name thee.

360

I'll beat thee; but I should infect my hands.

APEM. I would my tongue could rot them off!

TIM. Away, thou issue of a mangy dog!

Choler does kill me that thou art alive;

I swoon to see thee.

APEM. Would thou wouldst burst!

TIM. Away, thou tedious rogue! I am sorry I shall lose a stone by thee.

*[Throws a stone at him.]*

APEM. Beast!

TIM. Slave!

370

APEM. Toad!

TIM. Rogue, rogue, rogue!

I am sick of this false world, and will love nought  
But even the mere necessities upon't.

Then, Timon, presently prepare thy grave;

Lie where the light foam of the sea may beat

Thy grave-stone daily: make thine epitaph,

That death in me at others' lives may laugh.

*[To the gold]* O thou sweet king-killer, and dear divorce

355 *the cap*] the chief.

SCENE III      TIMON OF ATHENS

'Twixt natural son and sire! thou bright defiler      380  
 Of Hymen's purest bed! thou valiant Mars!  
 Thou ever young, fresh, loved, and delicate wooer,  
 Whose blush doth thaw the consecrated snow  
 That lies on Dian's lap! thou visible god,  
 That solder'st close impossibilities,  
 And makest them kiss! that speak'st with every tongue,  
 To every purpose! O thou touch of hearts!  
 Think thy slave man rebels; and by thy virtue  
 Set them into confounding odds, that beasts  
 May have the world in empire!

APEM.      Would 't were so!      390  
 But not till I am dead. I'll say thou hast gold:  
 Thou wilt be throng'd to shortly.

TIM.      Throng'd to!

APEM.      Ay.

TIM. Thy back, I prithee.

APEM.      Live, and love thy misery!

TIM. Long live so, and so die! [*Exit Apemantus.*] I  
 am quit.

Moe things like men? Eat, Timon, and abhor them.

*Enter Banditti*

FIRST BAN. Where should he have this gold? It is  
 some poor fragment, some slender ort of his remainder:  
 the mere want of gold, and the falling-from of his friends,  
 drove him into this melancholy.

380 *son and sire*] Rowe's correction of the Folio reading *Sunne and fire*.

387 *touch of hearts*] touchstone of hearts.

395 *Moe*] The Folio reading for *More*. Cf. line 431, *infra*. This line is  
 wrongly given to Apemantus in the Folios.

SEC. BAN. It is noised he hath a mass of treasure. 400

THIRD BAN. Let us make the assay upon him: if he care not for 't, he will supply us easily; if he covetously reserve it, how shall's get it?

SEC. BAN. True; for he bears it not about him; 't is hid.

FIRST BAN. Is not this he?

BANDITTI. Where?

SEC. BAN. 'T is his description.

THIRD BAN. He; I know him.

BANDITTI. Save thee, Timon.

TIM. Now, thieves? 410

BANDITTI. Soldiers, not thieves.

TIM. Both too; and women's sons.

BANDITTI. We are not thieves, but men that much do want.

TIM. Your greatest want is, you want much of meat. Why should you want? Behold, the earth hath roots; Within this mile break forth a hundred springs; The oaks bear mast, the briers scarlet hips; The bounteous housewife, nature, on each bush Lays her full mess before you. Want! why want?

FIRST BAN. We cannot live on grass, on berries, water, As beasts and birds and fishes. 421

TIM. Nor on the beasts themselves, the birds and fishes;

401 *make the assay upon him*] make trial of him.

414 *meat*] Thus the Folios. The sense is adequate. Hanmer substituted *men*, a quibble implying that the banditti lack manly character, and also want to feed on men, as Timon bids them at line 423, *infra*.

SCENE III      TIMON OF ATHENS

---

You must eat men. Yet thanks I must you con  
 That you are thieves profess'd, that you work not  
 In holier shapes: for there is boundless theft  
 In limited professions. Rascal thieves,  
 Here's gold. Go, suck the subtle blood o' the grape,  
 Till the high fever seethe your blood to froth,  
 And so 'scape hanging: trust not the physician;  
 His antidotes are poison, and he slays  
 Moe than you rob: take wealth and lives together;  
 Do villany, do, since you protest to do't,  
 Like workmen. I'll example you with thievery:  
 The sun's a thief, and with his great attraction  
 Robs the vast sea: the moon's an arrant thief,  
 And her pale fire she snatches from the sun:  
 The sea's a thief, whose liquid surge resolves

430

- 
- 423 *Yet thanks . . . con*] Yet I must give you thanks, must acknowledge myself grateful. To "con thanks" is a common phrase.  
 426 *limited*] regulated by law or prescription.  
 427 *subtle*] deceitful, treacherous.  
 431 *Moe*] Cf. line 395, *supra*.  
 432 *villany*] Rowe's correction of *villaine* of the Folios.  
*protest*] promise, vow. Thus the Folios. Theobald needlessly substituted *profess*.  
 433 *I'll example you with thievery*] I'll give you instances (from nature) authorising your thievery.  
 437-440 *The sea's a thief . . . excrement*] These lines are an obvious reminiscence of Anacreon's Ode "On the necessity of drinking," (XXI), which was popular in poetry of the French Renaissance, being translated by both Ronsard and Remy Belleau. Ronsard's rendering opens thus (Works, ed. Blanchemain, 1857, II, 286):

" La terre les eaux va boivant,  
 L'arbre la boit par sa racine

The moon into salt tears: the earth's a thief,  
 That feeds and breeds by a composture stol'n  
 From general excrement: each thing's a thief: 440  
 The laws, your curb and whip, in their rough power  
 Have uncheck'd theft. Love not yourselves; away,  
 Rob one another. There's more gold. Cut throats:  
 All that you meet are thieves: to Athens go,  
 Break open shops; nothing can you steal,  
 But thieves do lose it: steal not less for this  
 I give you; and gold confound you howsoe'er!  
 Amen.

THIRD BAN. Has almost charmed me from my pro-  
 fession by persuading me to it. 450

FIRST BAN. 'Tis in the malice of mankind that he  
 thus advises us; not to have us thrive in our mystery.

---

La mer éparse boit le vent,  
 Et le soleil boit la marine;  
 Le soleil est beu de la lune;  
 Tout boit, soit en haut ou en bas."

437-438 *whose liquid surge . . . tears*] This is a poetized account of the moon's responsibility for the tides. The rising of the tidal waves of the sea is presented as the effect of the salt tears shed by the moon. Shakespeare, with an eye to the bond between the moon and the sea, constantly applies the epithet "watery" to the moon. Cf. *Rich. III*, II, ii, 69-70: "That I being govern'd by the *watery moon* May send forth plenteous tears to drown the world." *Wint. Tale*, I, ii, 1: "the *watery star*." *Mids. N. Dr.*, II, i, 162; *Rom. and Jul.*, I, iv, 62: "moonshine's *watery beams*."

439 *composture*] composition, manure.

446 *not less*] Rowe inserted *not*, which the Folios omit by error.

451 *in the malice of mankind*] in or on account of his malignant hate of mankind (not out of any kindness to us).

452 *mystery*] profession, calling.



SCENE III TIMON OF ATHENS

SEC. BAN. I'll believe him as an enemy, and give over my trade.

FIRST BAN. Let us first see peace in Athens: there is no time so miserable but a man may be true.

*[Exeunt Banditti.]*

*Enter FLAVIUS*

FLAV. O you gods!  
 Is yond despised and ruinous man my lord?  
 Full of decay and failing? O monument  
 And wonder of good deeds evilly bestow'd! 460  
 What an alteration of honour  
 Has desperate want made!  
 What viler thing upon the earth than friends  
 Who can bring noblest minds to basest ends!  
 How rarely does it meet with this time's guise,  
 When man was wish'd to love his enemies!  
 Grant I may ever love, and rather woo  
 Those that would mischief me than those that do!  
 Has caught me in his eye: I will present

456 *may be true*] may turn honest.

461 *What an alteration of honour*] What an alteration from a state of honour (to one of disgrace).

465-466 *How rarely . . . enemies!*] How happily or admirably does the injunction to love one's enemies agree with the fashion of the time! The sentiment, which has here an ironical significance, is somewhat anachronistic on pagan lips.

467-468 *Grant I . . . those that do*] Grant that I may ever love and woo those who always profess to mean me mischief rather than those who do me mischief after false professions of kindness. Cf. the proverb very familiar in both France and Spain: "Defend me from my friends; from my enemies I can defend myself."

469 *Has caught*] The pronoun "he" is understood.

My honest grief unto him, and, as my lord, 470  
Still serve him with my life. My dearest master!

TIM. Away! what art thou?

FLAV. Have you forgot me, sir?

TIM. Why dost ask that? I have forgot all men;  
Then, if thou grant'st thou'rt a man, I have forgot thee.

FLAV. An honest poor servant of yours.

TIM. Then I know thee not:

I never had honest man about me, I; all  
I kept were knaves, to serve in meat to villains.

FLAV. The gods are witness,

Ne'er did poor steward wear a truer grief 480  
For his undone lord than mine eyes for you.

TIM. What, dost thou weep? come nearer; then I  
love thee,

Because thou art a woman, and disclaim'st  
Flinty mankind, whose eyes do never give  
But thorough lust and laughter. Pity's sleeping:  
Strange times, that weep with laughing, not with  
weeping!

FLAV. I beg of you to know me, good my lord,  
To accept my grief, and whilst this poor wealth lasts  
To entertain me as your steward still.

TIM. Had I a steward 490  
So true, so just, and now so comfortable?

474 *grant'st*] The Folios read absurdly *grunt'st*.

484-485 *whose eyes . . . sleeping*] whose eyes never flow, never yield to tears, but through lust and laughter. The emotions of pity are quiescent, are inactive.

489 *entertain me*] take me into service, engage me.

491 *so comfortable*] so comforting, so kindly.

SCENE III      TIMON OF ATHENS

---

It almost turns my dangerous nature mild.  
 Let me behold thy face. Surely this man  
 Was born of woman.

Forgive my general and exceptless rashness,  
 You perpetual-sober gods! I do proclaim  
 One honest man — mistake me not — but one;  
 No more, I pray, — and he's a steward.  
 How fain would I have hated all mankind!  
 And thou redeem'st thyself: but all, save thee,      500  
 I fell with curses.

Methinks thou art more honest now than wise;  
 For, by oppressing and betraying me,  
 Thou mightst have sooner got another service:  
 For many so arrive at second masters,  
 Upon their first lord's neck. But tell me true —  
 For I must ever doubt, though ne'er so sure —  
 Is not thy kindness subtle, covetous,  
 If not a usuring kindness and as rich men deal gifts,  
 Expecting in return twenty for one?      510

FLAV. No, my most worthy master; in whose breast  
 Doubt and suspect, alas, are placed too late:  
 You should have fear'd false times when you did  
 feast:

---

492 *It almost turns . . . mild*] Hanmer first substituted *mild* for the Folio reading *wild*, which might well stand. The reading *wild* gives the line the sense "It almost drives mad my nature already exposed by misfortune to the risk of losing its balance." "Turns . . . mild," which would mean "makes gentle," "softens," seems to weaken the significance of the passage.

509 *a usuring kindness*] a usurious, avaricious kindness.

512 *suspect*] suspicion; so again at line 514.

Suspect still comes where an estate is least.  
 That which I show, heaven knows, is merely love,  
 Duty and zeal to your unmatched mind,  
 Care of your food and living; and, believe it,  
 My most honour'd lord,  
 For any benefit that points to me,  
 Either in hope or present, I 'ld exchange 520  
 For this one wish, that you had power and wealth  
 To requite me by making rich yourself.

TIM. Look thee, 't is so! Thou singly honest man,  
 Here, take: the gods, out of my misery,  
 Have sent thee treasure. Go, live rich and happy;  
 But thus condition'd: thou shalt build from men,  
 Hate all, curse all, show charity to none,  
 But let the famish'd flesh slide from the bone  
 Ere thou relieve the beggar: give to dogs  
 What thou deniest to men; let prisons swallow 'em, 530  
 Debts wither 'em to nothing: be men like blasted woods,  
 And may diseases lick up their false bloods!  
 And so farewell, and thrive.

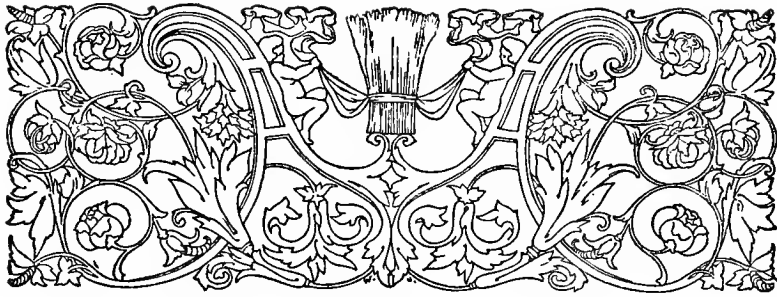
FLAV. O, let me stay  
 And comfort you, my master.

TIM. If thou hatest curses  
 Stay not: fly, whilst thou art blest and free:  
 Ne'er see thou man, and let me ne'er see thee.

[*Exeunt severally.*]

514 *Suspect . . . is least*] Suspicion is always present where wealth and position are at the lowest ebb.

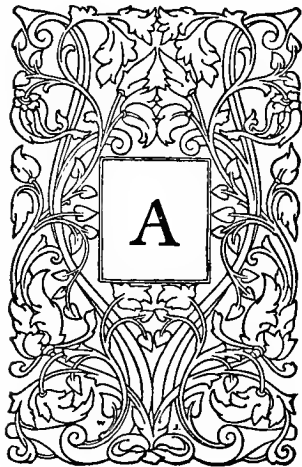
526 *But thus condition'd . . . from men*] But on these conditions, thou shalt build or abide apart from the habitations of mankind.



ACT FIFTH — SCENE I — THE WOODS  
BEFORE TIMON'S CAVE

*Enter Poet and Painter; TIMON watching them from his cave*

PAINTER



S I TOOK NOTE OF  
the place, it cannot be far where  
he abides.

POET. What's to be thought of  
him? does the rumour hold for  
true, that he's so full of gold?

PAIN. Certain: Alcibiades re-  
ports it; Phrynia and Timandra  
had gold of him: he likewise  
enriched poor straggling soldiers  
with great quantity: 't is said he  
gave unto his steward a mighty  
sum.

POET. Then this breaking of his has been but a try  
for his friends.

10

1-2 *As I took note . . . abides*] The painter had obviously already discovered Timon's retreat and has learnt of his recent interviews with Alcibiades, the Banditti and the steward. Cf. lines 5-8, *infra*. Ape-

PAIN. Nothing else: you shall see him a palm in Athens again, and flourish with the highest. Therefore 't is not amiss we tender our loves to him in this supposed distress of his: it will show honestly in us, and is very likely to load our purposes with what they travail for, if it be a just and true report that goes of his having.

POET. What have you now to present unto him?

PAIN. Nothing at this time but my visitation: only I will promise him an excellent piece.

POET. I must serve him so too, tell him of an intent <sup>20</sup> that's coming toward him.

PAIN. Good as the best. Promising is the very air o' the time: it opens the eyes of expectation: performance is ever the duller for his act; and, but in the plainer and simpler kind of people, the deed of saying is quite out of use. To promise is most courtly and fashionable: performance is a kind of will or testament which argues a great sickness in his judgement that makes it.

[*Timon comes from his cave, behind.*]

TIM. [*Aside*] Excellent workman! thou canst not paint a man so bad as is thyself. 30

---

mantus' remark: "Yonder comes a poet and a painter" (III, iv, 348, *supra*, and note) in no way accounts for their actual arrival on the scene.

11 *a palm*] Cf. *Psalm xcii*, 12: "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree."

15 *load our purposes*] fill up, thoroughly fulfil, our purposes; *purses* has been unconvincingly proposed for *purposes*.

16 *his having*] his wealth; so II, ii, 145, *supra*.

24-26 *but in the plainer . . . out of use*] except among the lower orders the performance of one's promise is quite out of fashion.

POET. I am thinking what I shall say I have provided for him: it must be a personating of himself; a satire against the softness of prosperity, with a discovery of the infinite flatteries that follow youth and opulency.

TIM. [*Aside*] Must thou needs stand for a villain in thine own work? wilt thou whip thine own faults in other men? Do so, I have gold for thee.

POET. Nay, let's seek him:  
Then do we sin against our own estate,  
When we may profit meet, and come too late. 40

PAIN. True;  
When the day serves, before black-corner'd night,  
Find what thou want'st by free and offer'd light.  
Come.

TIM. [*Aside*] I'll meet you at the turn. What a god's  
gold,  
That he is worshipp'd in a baser temple  
Than where swine feed!  
'T is thou that rigg'st the bark and plough'st the foam,  
Settlest admired reverence in a slave:  
To thee be worship! and thy saints for aye 50  
Be crown'd with plagues, that thee alone obey!  
Fit I meet them. [*Coming forward.*]

POET. Hail, worthy Timon!

PAIN. Our late noble master!

32 *a personating of himself*] a presentation of his own case.

42 *black-corner'd night*] night which is obscure as a dark corner or which creates dark corners. Many changes have been suggested for *black-corner'd*, e. g., *black-curtain'd*, *black-colour'd*, but none carries conviction.

45 *at the turn*] as you turn in your walk.

TIM. Have I once lived to see two honest men?

POET. Sir,

Having often of your open bounty tasted,  
Hearing you were retired, your friends fall'n off,  
Whose thankless natures — O abhorred spirits! —  
Not all the whips of heaven are large enough —  
What! to you,

60

Whose star-like nobleness gave life and influence  
To their whole being! I am rapt, and cannot cover  
The monstrous bulk of this ingratitude  
With any size of words.

TIM. Let it go naked, men may see't the better:  
You that are honest, by being what you are,  
Make them best seen and known.

PAIN. He and myself  
Have travail'd in the great shower of your gifts,  
And sweetly felt it.

TIM. Ay, you are honest men.

PAIN. We are hither come to offer you our service. 70

TIM. Most honest men! Why, how shall I requite you?  
Can you eat roots, and drink cold water? no.

BOTH. What we can do, we'll do, to do you service.

TIM. Ye're honest men: ye've heard that I have gold;  
I am sure you have: speak truth; ye're honest men.

PAIN. So it is said, my noble lord: but therefore  
Came not my friend nor I.

TIM. Good honest men! Thou draw'st a counterfeit

62 *I am rapt*] I am amazed, I am beside myself.

78 *Thou draw'st a counterfeit*] Thou canst paint a portrait. "Counterfeit"  
is often seriously used thus. Cf. *Merch. of Ven.*, III, ii, 115: "Fair





PAIN. I know none such, my lord.

POET. Nor I.

TIM. Look you, I love you well; I'll give you gold,  
Rid me these villains from your companies:  
Hang them or stab them, drown them in a draught, 100  
Confound them by some course, and come to me,  
I'll give you gold enough.

BOTH. Name them, my lord, let's know them.

TIM. You that way, and you this, but two in com-  
pany:

Each man apart, all single and alone,  
Yet an arch-villain keeps him company.  
If, where thou art, two villains shall not be,  
Come not near him. If thou wouldst not reside  
But where one villain is, then him abandon.  
Hence, pack! there's gold; you came for gold, ye slaves:  
[*To Painter*] You have work for me, there's payment:  
hence! 111

[*To Poet*] You are an alchemist, make gold of that:  
Out, rascal dogs!

[*Beats them out, and then retires into his cave.*]

100 *in a draught*] in the jakes.

101 *Confound . . . course*] Destroy them by some means.

104-106 *You that way . . . keeps him company*] You go that way and you go this way; then each of you will be two in company, though each of you will be apart and quite alone. Yet an arch-villain (*i. e.*, the evil part of each of yourselves), will be a companion for each of you. Cf. Timon's admonition, line 99, *supra*: "Rid me these villains from your companies."

110 *there's gold*] Timon throws a stone.

111 *You have work for me*] You have to rid yourselves of the villainous vice that goes in your company. Hanmer read *You have work'd for*

SCENE I      TIMON OF ATHENS

---

*Enter FLAVIUS and two Senators*

FLAV. It is in vain that you would speak with  
Timon  
For he is set so only to himself  
That nothing but himself which looks like man  
Is friendly with him.

FIRST SEN.      Bring us to his cave:  
It is our part and promise to the Athenians  
To speak with Timon.

SEC. SEN.      At all times alike  
Men are not still the same: 't was time and griefs      120  
That framed him thus: time, with his fairer hand,  
Offering the fortunes of his former days,  
The former man may make him. Bring us to  
him,  
And chance it as it may.

FLAV.      Here is his cave.  
Peace and content be here! Lord Timon! Timon!  
Look out, and speak to friends: the Athenians  
By two of their most reverend senate greet thee:  
Speak to them, noble Timon.

---

*me and Malone You have done work for me.* But no change is absolutely necessary. Neither is it essential to follow the suggestion of the Globe Editors in inserting the stage direction [*To Painter*] here and [*To Poet*] in the next line. No such directions appear in any earlier edition. Both remarks are equally applicable to the Poet and to the Painter and are doubtless addressed to them jointly.

114 *Enter Flavius and two Senators*] Many modern editors begin a new scene here.

115 *set so only to himself*] wrapped up so entirely in himself.

TIMON comes from his cave

TIM. Thou sun, that comfort'st, burn! Speak, and  
be hang'd:

For each true word, a blister! and each false 130  
Be as a cauterizing to the root o' the tongue,  
Consuming it with speaking!

FIRST SEN. Worthy Timon, —

TIM. Of none but such as you, and you of Timon.

FIRST SEN. The senators of Athens greet thee, Timon.

TIM. I thank them, and would send them back the  
plague,

Could I but catch it for them.

FIRST SEN. O, forget

What we are sorry for ourselves in thee.

The senators with one consent of love

Entreat thee back to Athens; who have thought

On special dignities, which vacant lie 140

For thy best use and wearing.

SEC. SEN. They confess

Toward thee forgetfulness too general, gross:

Which now the public body, which doth seldom

129 *comfort'st*] Pope's emendation of the First Folio's *comforts* which seems the better reading.

131 *cauterizing*] a searing with hot iron. The First Folio read *cantherizing* which the later Folios misspell *Catherizing*. But the First Folio reading, though attempts have been made to justify it, seems to be a misprint suggested by some confused reminiscence of the word *Cantharides*.

138 *one consent*] one united voice, from the Latin "concentus."

142 *too general, gross*] too common, too patent.

143-149 *Which now . . . by the dram*] The grammatical construction is irregular here. "Which" has no strictly grammatical place in the sentence and is merely conjunctive, cf. V, ii, 7, *infra*. The mean-



SEC. SEN.           And shakes his threatening sword  
Against the walls of Athens.

FIRST SEN.                           Therefore, Timon, —

TIM. Well, sir, I will; therefore, I will, sir; thus:  
If Alcibiades kill my countrymen,  
Let Alcibiades know this of Timon,  
That Timon cares not. But if he sack fair Athens,  
And take our goodly aged men by the beards,           170  
Giving our holy virgins to the stain  
Of contumelious, beastly, mad-brain'd war;  
Then let him know, and tell him Timon speaks it,  
In pity of our aged and our youth,  
I cannot choose but tell him, that I care not,  
And let him take 't at worst; for their knives care not,  
While you have throats to answer: for myself,  
There 's not a whittle in the unruly camp,  
But I do prize it at my love before  
The reverend'st throat in Athens. So I leave you   180  
To the protection of the prosperous gods,  
As thieves to keepers.

FLAV.                           Stay not; all 's in vain.

TIM. Why, I was writing of my epitaph;  
It will be seen to-morrow: my long sickness  
Of health and living now begins to mend,  
And nothing brings me all things. Go, live still;  
Be Alcibiades your plague, you his,  
And last so long enough!

178 *a whittle*] a clasp-knife or pocket-knife. The word is still in dialect use.

181 *prosperous gods*] gods who are propitious, who bring prosperity. Cf.

*Othello*, I, iii, 244: "To my unfolding lend your *prosperous* ear."

184 *my long sickness*] the long disease of life.

SCENE I TIMON OF ATHENS

---

FIRST SEN. We speak in vain.

TIM. But yet I love my country, and am not  
One that rejoices in the common wreck, 190  
As common bruit doth put it.

FIRST SEN. That's well spoke.

TIM. Commend me to my loving countrymen, —

FIRST SEN. These words become your lips as they pass  
thorough them.

SEC. SEN. And enter in our ears like great triumphers  
In their applauding gates.

TIM. Commend me to them;

And tell them that, to ease them of their griefs,  
Their fears of hostile strokes, their aches, losses,  
Their pang's of love, with other incident throes  
That nature's fragile vessel doth sustain  
In life's uncertain voyage, I will some kindness do them:  
I'll teach them to prevent wild Alcibiades' wrath. 201

FIRST SEN. I like this well; he will return again.

TIM. I have a tree, which grows here in my close,  
That mine own use invites me to cut down,  
And shortly must I fell it: tell my friends,  
Tell Athens, in the sequence of degree

---

191 *common bruit*] common rumour.

197 *aches*] a dissyllable. Cf. I, i, 250, *supra*.

198 *incident*] contingent. Cf. "incidency" for "contingency" in *Wint. Tale*, I, ii, 403.

203-210 *I have a tree . . . hang himself*] Plutarch in his *Life of Antony* credits Timon with a speech to this precise effect. Shakespeare follows Plutarch's words very literally here.

206 *in the sequence of degree*] in due order of precedence, from highest to lowest.

From high to low throughout, that whoso please  
 To stop affliction, let him take his haste,  
 Come hither ere my tree hath felt the axe,  
 And hang himself: I pray you, do my greeting. 210

FLAV. Trouble him no further; thus you still shall  
 find him.

TIM. Come not to me again: but say to Athens,  
 Timon hath made his everlasting mansion  
 Upon the beached verge of the salt flood;  
 Who once a day with his embossed froth  
 The turbulent surge shall cover: thither come,  
 And let my grave-stone be your oracle.  
 Lips, let sour words go by and language end:  
 What is amiss, plague and infection mend!  
 Graves only be men's works, and death their gain! 220  
 Sun, hide thy beams! Timon hath done his reign.

[Retires to his cave.]

FIRST SEN. His discontents are unremoveably  
 Coupled to nature.

SEC. SEN. Our hope in him is dead: let us return,  
 And strain what other means is left unto us  
 In our dear peril.

FIRST SEN. It requires swift foot. [Exeunt.]

208 *take his haste*] hasten; the converse of "take his time."

214 *the beached verge . . . flood*] Cf. *Mids. N. Dr.*, II, i, 85: "the  
*beached margent* of the sea."

215 *embossed froth*] swollen surf.

218 *sour*] Rowe's correction of the Folio reading *four*.

225 *strain*] labour at with all energy.

226 *dear*] dire or desperate.



SCENE II      TIMON OF ATHENS

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SCENE II — BEFORE THE WALLS OF ATHENS

*Enter two Senators and a Messenger*

FIRST SEN. Thou hast painfully discover'd: are his  
files

As full as thy report?

MESS. I have spoke the least:

Besides, his expedition promises

Present approach.

SEC. SEN. We stand much hazard, if they bring not  
Timon.

MESS. I met a courier, one mine ancient friend;  
Whom, though in general part we were opposed,  
Yet our old love made a particular force,  
And made us speak like friends: this man was riding  
From Alcibiades to Timon's cave, 10  
With letters of entreaty, which imported  
His fellowship i' the cause against your city,  
In part for his sake moved.

FIRST SEN. Here come our brothers.

---

1 *Thou hast painfully discover'd*] Thou hast made grievous disclosures.  
*files*] musters, numbers of his army.

7 *Whom*] The relative here is merely conjunctive like "which" in V, i, 143,  
*supra*.

*in general part*] in the public cause.

8 *made a particular force*] had a private or personal effect, appealed to  
our private sentiments. The repetition of *made* in the next line seems  
awkward, and has suggested the change here to *had*; "particular"  
(*i. e.*, private) is the opposite of "general" (*i. e.*, public) in line 7.

*Enter Senators from TIMON*

THIRD SEN. No talk of Timon, nothing of him expect.  
The enemies' drum is heard, and fearful scouring  
Doth choke the air with dust: in, and prepare:  
Ours is the fall, I fear, our foes the snare. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III — THE WOODS — TIMON'S CAVE, AND A  
RUDE TOMB SEEN

*Enter a Soldier, seeking TIMON*

SOLD. By all description this should be the place.  
Who's here? speak, ho! No answer! What is this?  
Timon is dead, who hath outstretch'd his span:  
Some beast read this; there does not live a man.  
Dead, sure; and this his grave. What's on this tomb  
I cannot read; the character I'll take with wax:

15 *fearful scouring*] the rushing about of terror-stricken fugitives.  
3-4 *Timon is dead . . . live a man*] These lines are sometimes regarded as the opening words of an inscription by Timon himself which he has set on the outer wall of the cave, and the soldier is thought to be deciphering them with difficulty. But such an explanation is difficult to reconcile with lines 5-6, where the soldier says he cannot read what is written on the tomb and takes an impression of the writing in wax for his captain to decipher. (See also V, iv, 67-9, *infra.*) Probably the soldier is expressing his own opinion, in view of his failure to get any response to his call, when he says "Timon is dead," while in his remark "some beast read this; there does not live a man" he is peevishly complaining of his inability to read the inscription, which (he thinks) only a beast, and not a man, is likely to interpret. For *read this* Theobald substituted *rcar'd this* which is unconvincingly interpreted to mean that as no man is living in the cave some beast must have built up Timon's tomb.

SCENE IV    TIMON OF ATHENS

---

Our captain hath in every figure skill,  
An aged interpreter, though young in days:  
Before proud Athens he 's set down by this,  
Whose fall the mark of his ambition is.            [Exit. 10

SCENE IV — BEFORE THE WALLS OF ATHENS

*Trumpets sound. Enter ALCIBIADES with his powers*

ALCIB. Sound to this coward and lascivious town  
Our terrible approach.            [*A parley sounded.*

*Enter Senators upon the walls*

Till now you have gone on and fill'd the time  
With all licentious measure, making your wills  
The scope of justice; till now myself and such  
As slept within the shadow of your power  
Have wander'd with our traversed arms and breathed  
Our sufferance vainly: now the time is flush,  
When crouching marrow in the bearer strong  
Cries of itself "No more:" now breathless wrong        10  
Shall sit and pant in your great chairs of ease,  
And pury insolence shall break his wind  
With fear and horrid flight.

---

8 *aged*] veteran, expert.

Sc. III. 10 *mark*] aim, goal.

Sc. IV. 4-5 *making your wills . . . justice*] making your pleasures,  
your indulgences, the bound or standard of justice.

7 *traversed*] submissively folded or crossed.

8 *sufferance*] suffering.

*flush*] ripe.

9 *crouching marrow*] vigour which is bent down by oppression.

13 *horrid flight*] flight caused by horror or terror.

FIRST SEN. Noble and young,  
When thy first griefs were but a mere conceit,  
Ere thou hadst power or we had cause of fear,  
We sent to thee, to give thy rages balm,  
To wipe out our ingratitude with loves  
Above their quantity.

SEC. SEN. So did we woo  
Transformed Timon to our city's love  
By humble message and by promised means: 20  
We were not all unkind, nor all deserve  
The common stroke of war.

FIRST SEN. These walls of ours  
Were not erected by their hands from whom  
You have received your griefs: nor are they such  
That these great towers, trophies and schools should fall  
For private faults in them.

SEC. SEN. Nor are they living  
Who were the motives that you first went out;  
Shame, that they wanted cunning, in excess  
Hath broke their hearts. March, noble lord,  
Into our city with thy banners spread: 30  
By decimation and a tithed death —  
If thy revenges hunger for that food

18 *Above their quantity*] "Their" probably refers to "thy first griefs" of line 14.

24 *griefs*] Theobald's correction of the Folio reading *grief*.

26 *private faults in them*] personal faults of those who caused your griefs.

27 *motives . . . went out*] instigators of your first expulsion.

28-29 *Shame . . . hearts*] The extremity of shame that they wanted cunning or were so stupid as to banish you has broken their hearts.

SCENE IV TIMON OF ATHENS

---

Which nature loathes — take thou the destined tenth,  
 And by the hazard of the spotted die  
 Let die the spotted.

FIRST SEN. All have not offended;  
 For those that were, it is not square to take,  
 On those that are, revenges: crimes, like lands,  
 Are not inherited. Then, dear countryman,  
 Bring in thy ranks, but leave without thy rage:  
 Spare thy Athenian cradle and those kin 40  
 Which, in the bluster of thy wrath, must fall  
 With those that have offended: like a shepherd  
 Approach the fold and cull the infected forth,  
 But kill not all together.

SEC. SEN. What thou wilt,  
 Thou rather shalt enforce it with thy smile  
 Than hew to't with thy sword.

FIRST SEN. Set but thy foot  
 Against our rampired gates, and they shall ope;  
 So thou wilt send thy gentle heart before,  
 To say thou'lt enter friendly.

SEC. SEN. Throw thy glove,  
 Or any token of thine honour else, 50  
 That thou wilt use the wars as thy redress  
 And not as our confusion, all thy powers  
 Shall make their harbour in our town, till we  
 Have seal'd thy full desire.

---

36 *square*] fair, right.

37 *revenges*] Steevens' emendation of the Folio reading *revenge*. The change improves the metre.

47 *rampired*] "Rampire" is a common form of "rampart."

ALCIB. Then there 's my glove ;  
Descend, and open your uncharged ports :  
Those enemies of Timon's, and mine own,  
Whom you yourselves shall set out for reproof,  
Fall, and no more : and, to atone your fears  
With my more noble meaning, not a man  
Shall pass his quarter, or offend the stream 60  
Of regular justice in your city's bounds,  
But shall be render'd to your public laws  
At heaviest answer.

BOTH. 'Tis most nobly spoken.

ALCIB. Descend, and keep your words.

[*The Senators descend, and open the gates.*]

*Enter Soldier*

SOLD. My noble general, Timon is dead ;  
Entomb'd upon the very hem o' the sea ;  
And on his grave-stone this insculpture, which

---

55 *Descend*] The First Folio misprints *Defend*. The senators are "on the walls" (see stage direction, l. 2, *supra*). They have been speaking from the balcony at the back of the stage (cf. *Tit. Andr.*, I, i, 1, and note, and *K. John*, II, i, 201 *seq.* *uncharged ports*] unassailed gates.

58 *to atone*] to reconcile.

62 *render'd to your*] Lord Chedworth's emendation of the difficult old readings *remedied to your* in the First Folio and *remedied by your* in the later Folios. "Remedied to" has been explained as "redressed according to." But the sense is rather strained.

63 *At heaviest answer*] To make fullest reparation.

66 *the very hem*] the extreme margin.

SCENE IV      TIMON OF ATHENS

---

With wax I brought away, whose soft impression  
Interprets for my poor ignorance.

ALCIB. [*Reads*]

“Here lies a wretched corse, of wretched soul bereft:      70  
Seek not my name: a plague consume you wicked caitiffs left!  
Here lie I, Timon; who, alive, all living men did hate:  
Pass by and curse thy fill; but pass and stay not here thy gait.”

These well express in thee thy latter spirits:  
Though thou abhorr'dst in us our human griefs,  
Scorn'dst our brain's flow and those our droplets which  
From niggard nature fall, yet rich conceit  
Taught thee to make vast Neptune weep for aye  
On thy low grave, on faults forgiven.      Dead  
Is noble Timon: of whose memory      80  
Hereafter more. Bring me into your city,

---

70-73 *Here lies a wretched corse . . . not here thy gait*] In North's translation of the account of Timon given by Plutarch in his *Life of M. Antonius*, these four lines are found *verbatim*, with the difference that *wretches* there takes the place of *caitiffs* (l. 71), and that each of the two couplets is presented separately as an alternative epitaph on Timon of different authorship. Plutarch assigns the first two lines to Timon himself and the second two lines to the poet Callimachus. The dramatist could only have joined the two couplets together by an hasty oversight. There is no logical connection between them. The second line of the first couplet which bids the reader "Seek not my name," manifestly contradicts the first line of the second couplet which opens with "Here lie I, Timon."

76 *brain's flow*] flow of tears. "Brain" is not uncommonly found in this connection. Cf. Drayton's *Miracles of Moses*, Bk. 3, l. 417: "the fountains of *his brain*."

77 *rich conceit*] a fruitful imagination.

## TIMON OF ATHENS

ACT V

---

And I will use the olive with my sword,  
Make war breed peace, make peace stint war, make each  
Prescribe to other as each other's leech.  
Let our drums strike. [*Exeunt.*

---

83 *stint*] stop.

84 *leech*] physician.

85 *strike*] strike up, sound. Cf. *Rich. III*, IV, iv, 148: "*strike*  
alarums, *drums*," and *Hen. VIII*, I, iv, 108: "Let the music  
*knock* it."

















